

As night fell, the darkness came alive

Ehsan Dabbaghi & Emrah Elmasli tackle our latest **Speed Painting** topic

Excavation Digger Vehicle

Hoi Mun Tham develops his initial thumbnails in his second instalment, refining his chosen concept before the final illustration stage of the **Vehicle Painting Series**

Space Battle

Chee Ming Wong picks a fight in space and talks us through the process of painting an epic battle scene in our **Space Painting Series**

Concept Art, Digital & Matte Painting Magazine
Issue 040 April 2009

BRADFORD RIGNEY

As freelance illustrator, **Bradford Rigney** takes time out from illustrating all things dark and twisted, we take the opportunity to chat to him about life, work, and the fascinating journey that has led him to where we find him today...



Interviews

Bradford Rigney & Robin Olausson



Articles

The Sketchbook of John Wu



Galleries

Nykolai Aleksander, Andrée Wallin & Alex Broecke, plus more!



Tutorials

Space Painting Tutorial Series: Part 10 – Space Battle by **Chee Ming Wong**, plus more!



Making Of's

'Thunderstorm' by **Dmitry Mitsuk**, plus more!



Editorial

Welcome to an issue of big feet and one-eyed monsters – and that's just the stylised challenge!

We kick this month's issue off with an interview with an artist we've come to know through the production of *Digital Art Masters: Volume 4*; he's an illustrator living in Mississippi (my favourite word) who has worked for the likes of White-Wolf Publishing and Fantasy Flight Games to name just a couple of his clients

to date. We're talking about **Bradford Rigney**, whose artwork tore us into pieces when we had to choose which of his great images to feature in our upcoming book project. Luckily, we managed to get this interview with Brad where we can happily show you his full portfolio on as many pages as we like, because we're pretty greedy like that (p.7). Our second interviewee is no stranger to *2D Artist*; in fact, he's been in our galleries, and written making of articles and tutorials for us in the past; he's now on the lookout for full-time work in the industry so we thought it was about time we got to know him better and let the world know, too! Check out our interview with the very talented concept artist, **Robin Olausson** on p.17.

John Wu invites us into the pages of his sketchbook this month, where we stumble upon all kinds of weird and wonderful things, from stylised characters and cars, to interiors, mechs, ships and weapons. One thing that these all have in common is that they have all had the privilege of being drawn by the hand of John Wu – one of the industry's greats (p.31). (If you like what you see from John then check out the interview we ran with him back in the April 2007 issue!)

From sketchbooks to tutorials, **Hoi Mun Tham** takes us this month from the initial conceiving stage of his futuristic digger vehicle (featured in the February 2009 issue) through the refinement of his chosen concept (p.65). **Dwayne Vance** will be back next month with the final instalment of his interpretation of this series' brief, so be sure to stop by again next month to check that out. (Mun's final chapter will be featured in the June 2009 issue.) Our speed painting brief, "As night fell, the darkness came alive" has been tackled by **Ehsan Dabbaghi** and *2D Artist* regular, **Emrah Elmasli** (p.71), and **Chee Ming Wong** brings us a healthy dose of space painting – this month, we're painting a space battle scene! Chee even goes as far as to jot down a storyboard; it's a great tutorial for those who are keen to get into the industry as a concept artist as it's packed full of interesting insights from Chee, who let's not forget is the CEO of his own digital art studio in London, UK. We could all learn a thing or two from Chee's commitment to the industry and digital art community (p.82).

In the interest of diversity, we bring you a stormy matte painting in our making of section this month, created by **Dmitry Mitsuk** (p.97); **Ejiwa A. Ebenebe** also talks us through the painting of her stunning female character in her piece titled, *Snowfall* (p.105). Our gallery features plenty of great talent, from the likes of gallery regular **Ioan Dumitrescu**, as well as **Nykolai Aleksander**, **Andrée Wallin** and **Mathieu Leyssenne** (p.39).

Contents

What's in this month?

Bradford Rigney

Freelance Illustrator

Robin Olausson

Freelance Concept Artist

Sketchbook

The Sketchbook of John Wu

The Gallery

10 of the Best 2D Artworks

Stylised Characters

This Month's Finalists & Last Month's Making Of's

Vehicle Painting

Tutorial Series: Part 3

Speed Painting

Ehsan Dabbaghi & Emrah Elmasli

Space Painting

Part 10 – Space Battle, by Chee Ming Wong

Thunderstorm

Project Overview by Dmitry Mitsuk

Snowfall

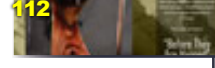
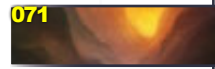
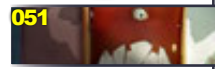
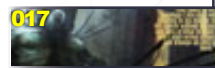
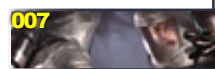
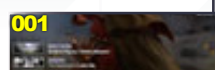
Project Overview by Ejiwa A. Ebenebe

Before They are Hanged

Digital Art Masters: V3 Free Chapter Promotion

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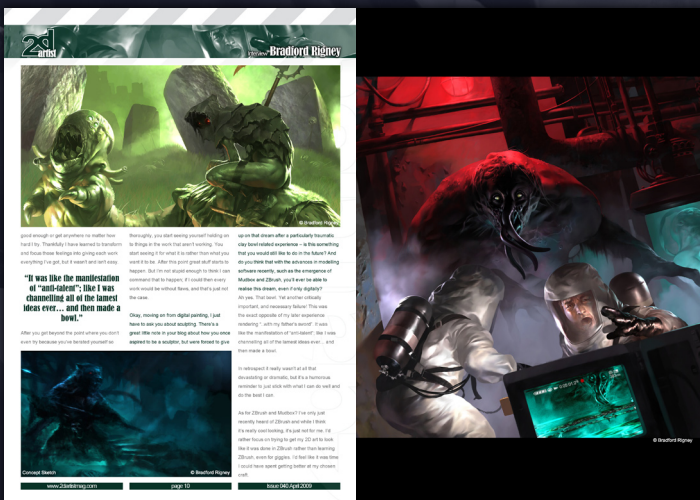
Well, I hope this month's offerings keep you busy until next month's issue hits the virtual shelves in May. Keep us posted with your own art creations – we welcome gallery submissions and interest from those looking for freelance tutorial work. So sit back, relax, and enjoy the April issue. We look forward to hearing from you! **Ed.**

If you're having problems viewing the double-page spreads that we feature in this magazine, follow this handy little guide on how to set up your PDF reader!



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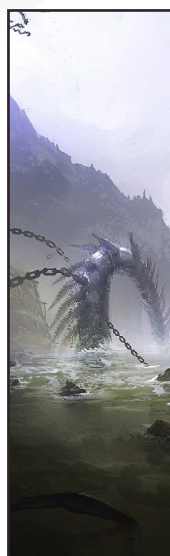
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Contributing Artists

Every month, many artists around the world contribute to 3DCreative & 2DArtist magazines. Here you can find out all about them. If you would like to be a part of 3DCreative or 2DArtist Magazines, please contact:

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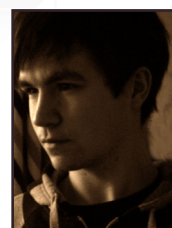


Robin Olausson

24-years old from south Sweden, currently a student at the school of future entertainment in Karlshamn, and working as a freelance concept artist/student. He's now looking for an in-house position anywhere around the globe. He's been freelancing for 2-3 years for different companies and is also familiar working with 3D applications, such as Maya and ZBrush.

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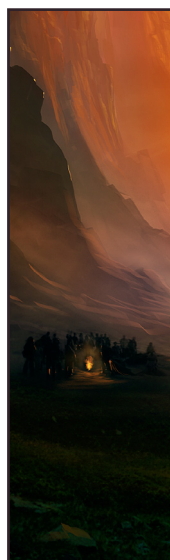
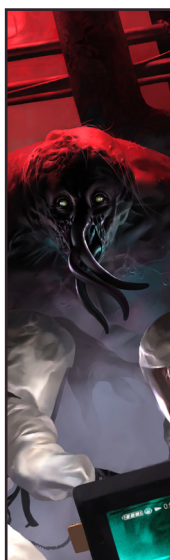


Bradford Rigney

38-year-old freelance illustrator specialising in horror, sci-fi and fantasy art, particularly in the table-top gaming industry for

clients such as White-Wolf Publishing and Fantasy Flight Games. While setting his sights on breaking into the graphic novel, board game and video-game cover art industries, Bradford currently works and lives in Petal, Mississippi with his wife Katherine and 9-month-old daughter, Ginger.

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Ehsan Dabbaghi

21-years old, residing in Iran. He didn't have teachers, books or anyone to turn to for help. With little hope, he pursued his passion for art and started painting with a computer at 17. He spent a year releasing his pain into his art; he became physically ill, feeling locked in a mental prison, surrounded by the pain suffered as a child. Many of his paintings express a dark, lonesome mood; he is learning and growing as an artist daily.

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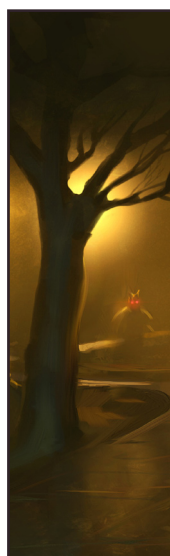


Chee Ming Wong

Has over 8 years of creative visualisation and pre-production experience, having worked on various independent game

projects, publications and CGI pre-production artwork. He is currently the CEO of his own digital art studio, Opus Artz, based in London. Previous work includes his role as senior concept artist and visual lead for *Infinity: The Quest for Earth MMO 2009*, plus numerous commercial publications.

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Emrah Elmasli

Turkish concept artist based in London, UK. He's working at Lionhead Studios as a full-time senior concept artist. Before coming to the UK, he was a freelance artist living in Istanbul, Turkey and was working for various clients like Crystal Dynamics, Irrational Games, CGToolKit and Fantasy Flight Games, as well as ad agencies. He then found himself in the UK where he draws everyday and enjoys the city in his spare time.

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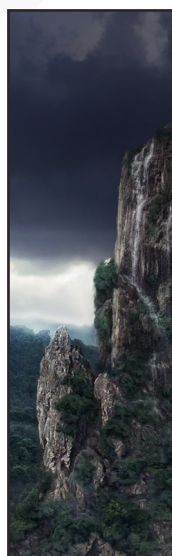
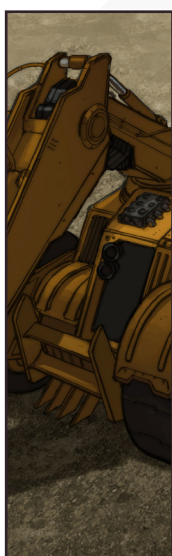
Tham Hoï Mun

The early *Star Wars* trilogy really got him into wanting to become a concept artist. He graduated from art school in

2006 and has been working in the field as a concept artist for almost 3 years. He spent time working for a production studio and is now a full-time freelancer.

He's worked on several projects which include games, commercials, animations, and toys, and would love to teach someday!

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Dmitry Mitsuk

Digital artist/illustrator/
freelancer in Toronto, Canada.

His art experience consists of traditional media and digital illustration, and he has recently found his way into matte painting. He's worked as a digital artist in different industries, and is now currently trying for a successful freelance position.

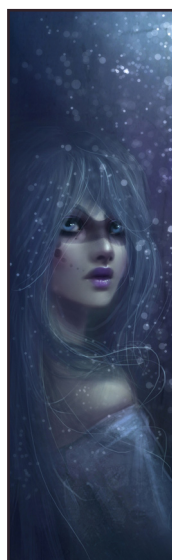
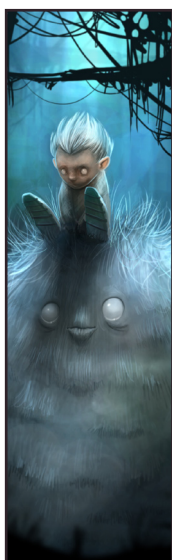
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Dave Neale

Started using Photoshop whilst doing his Illustration degree in Hull, UK, and has taught himself from there onwards. After

graduating in 2005, he has worked as a freelance consultant for EA games, sold prints in galleries, and has completed various freelance projects in the illustration field. Now represented by Advocate Illustration Agency, he hopes to get more work on children's books and would like to move into concept design for animation. <http://www.daveneale.co.uk>
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Ejiwa Ebenebe

Born on 19 November, 1990.

She's been passionate about art since she was a child, but only started painting seriously about 6 years ago. She is primarily a digital painter and uses Photoshop as her main tool, but loves experimenting with different artistic forms as well, and hopes to increase her skills in 3D modelling and in other art media. She is currently a student at the Media Design School in Auckland, New Zealand.

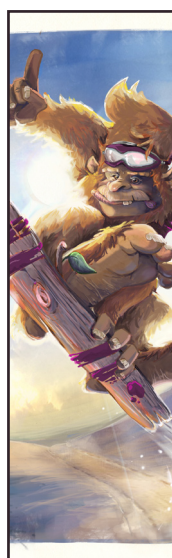
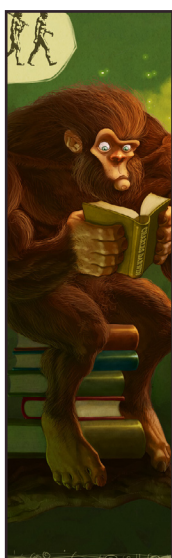
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Rolando Mallada

A passionate artist that loves comic book and illustration work. Four years ago he started working professionally in the comic industry in the USA. At present, he enjoys giving birth to gorillas, zombie teddy bears and other creatures for APE Comics. His headquarters are in Montevideo, Uruguay. There he passes the afternoons working at his wife's company, with his pet dog and a hot cup of coffee.

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Ruth Martinez

Studied graphic design, but always felt attracted to illustration and animation.

She's currently working as a 2D animator in the games industry, and is happy to be working professionally in her hobby. She also pursues her passion for illustration through the likes of the 2DArtist stylised challenges!

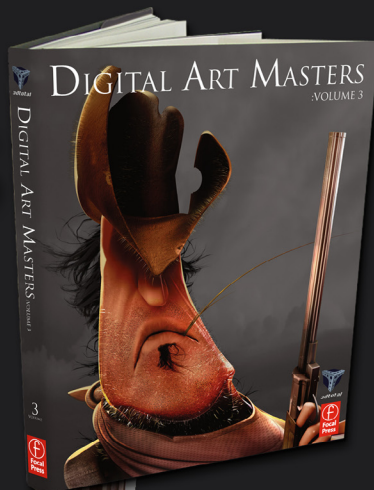
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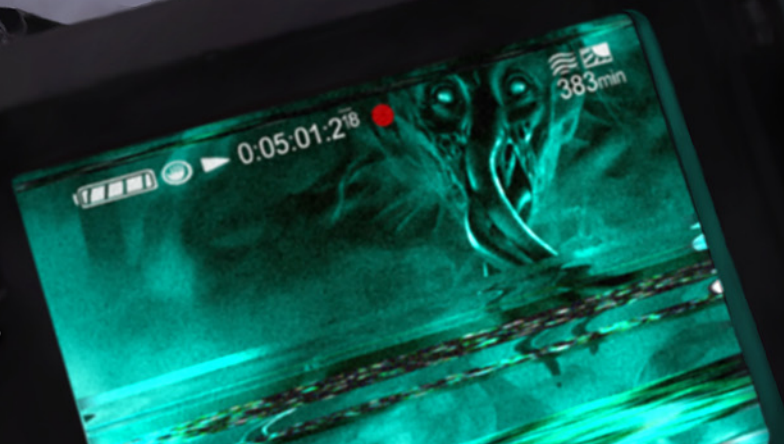
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BRADFORD RIGNEY



Brad Rigney is a freelance illustrator with a passion for all things dark and twisted. He's been on a fascinating journey to reach where he is today and we were lucky enough to get the chance to chat to him recently about his life, his work and why his rising popularity has taken him by surprise.

"There is something about darkness - both literal and spiritual - mystery and threat that I'm hopelessly fascinated with. I'm obsessed with trying to capture the essence of those things for some reason. I used to ask myself why, but I've never found a suitable answer."



BRADFORD RIGNEY

Hi Brad – and thanks for talking the time out to talk to us! Now I usually kick these interviews off by asking a bit about an artist's background and training, and from what I've read of your blog, it sounds like you've had one of the more unconventional routes into the 2D art industry. Could you tell us a little about how you came to be where you are today?

Hi Jo! I'm grateful that you guys even asked for an interview, so the pleasure is mine, thanks for having me!

Let's see ... yeah, "unconventional" is definitely one way to describe the journey I've taken to reach where I am now! [Laughs]. I wish I could say that I went to this or that art school, or received training from such and such instructor, but that's just not the case. In fact, I have the equivalent of a ninth grade education and was ejected from high school.

"I'm self taught" is the Cliffs Note's version.



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I've illustrated my whole life, but really became serious about it in my late twenties, when I was just basically doing portraits of my friends' RPG characters from our weekly *Shadowrun* and *Legend of the Five Rings* game sessions.

I started shopping my portfolio around to game companies and was confident that they would immediately hire me because my friends thought I was good enough.

“When everyone else was out partying, I was drawing. When everyone else was out on dates, I was drawing. When everyone else was getting somewhere, getting married and getting paid, I was drawing.”

I was promptly, and thankfully, given a good boot to the behind by several art directors who kindly – and some not so kindly – informed me that I had a long way to go if I expected to have my work published with them. That was the first in a long line of very important, and necessary, failures that would guide me to better my skills.

After a brief run doing freelance illustration for various table-top RPG companies, I decided that



Concept Sketch

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the money wasn't enough, so I had better get into the video gaming industry and go to college for 3D rendering. I'll spare you the boring details and tell you that it essentially boiled down to me being unequipped to handle the academics. That - in combination with the fact that I was getting outclassed by teens putting the finishing touches to their second short film when I was trying to figure out how to render a cube - ended up being exactly the epic failure that I needed to push me into a bottomless obsession to better my 2D skills to the best of their ability...

After coming back home I literally locked myself into an apartment for eight years and practiced. When everyone else was out partying, I was drawing. When everyone else was out on dates, I was drawing. When everyone else was getting somewhere, getting married and getting paid, I was drawing.

Towards the middle of that eight year period I was even taken in by some friends of mine in LA when they saw how hell-bent I had become and how far I had let myself go! [Laughs]. And it's to people like that - my family and friends - that I really owe all my little victories and successes to. Their kindness and charity, along with the experience I gained from my various failures, gave me the means to improve my skills on my own and brought me to where I find myself today.

Can I ask you about what projects you're working on at the moment? Or if you're not allowed to talk about them yet, is there something you worked on in the past that really stood out? Something that you're particularly proud of?

I'm really excited about what I'm working on right now. I wish I could outright say what it is, but due to cloak and dagger NDA contract agreements I can't. However, I can say that it's related to a certain sanity-blasting, dead yet dreaming entity that lies housed in an epoch-old, dead city beneath the waves ...

When it comes to something I'm particularly proud of... hmm, let's see. I'd have to say "Containment Breach Sub-Level 5". It has a lot of elements I've wanted to incorporate into an image for a long time, like the first person camcorder idea and mad-science theme. I feel



like the mood I wanted to convey translated pretty well, too; the reaction I've gotten from it has been really satisfying. I'll never get over how great it feels to have people give me their time and tell me how much they enjoy it, or any other work for that matter.

Now it was interesting looking at your online gallery, because I'm used to being inundated with loads of amazing images when looking through an artist's profile. While your images are certainly amazing, there aren't actually that many to admire at the moment! I gather you've just taken a large amount of your older work down, so I guess the question I want to ask is: why? Was it just down to the quality of the work or were there any other reasons?

Hey, thanks for the compliment, Jo! I'm glad you like them!

I've actually just recently taken a bunch of older work down from my DeviantART gallery. You wouldn't know it, but I have an enormous amount of work, but it's simply not reflective of my current skill level and personal standards. I decided a long time ago that my personal standard would always be "quality above quantity". That's become even more important now that there are actually people who say they are a fan of my work and me. That will always blow me away! Me? Having fans?! [Laughs]. I want to give only what I think is my best, and I think any fans I may have or get, deserve only that. Sure a few of them are "Okay", but "Okay" doesn't really cut it for me.

Well despite the fact that your gallery is small at the moment, your work still looks great! There seems to be a real dark atmosphere to a lot of your images – and a sense of impending threat, even in those images where the source of the threat isn't obvious. Your choice of colour, lighting and use of shadows seem key to this, but what is it about this dark style that particularly attracts you?

I'm thrilled you got that feel from them. This is a good question, one that I hope I can answer without sounding like a complete goofbag. There is something about darkness - both literal and spiritual - mystery and threat that I'm hopelessly fascinated with. I'm obsessed with trying to capture the essence of those things for some reason. I used to ask myself why, but





I've never found a suitable answer. You can't see everything in darkness, which means you don't know where it's safe and where it's not, or what's even there. That usually makes people afraid, or curious, or both. And we love to be afraid. We pay for it! We willingly go and sit in theatres, know it's coming, and then resist it when it's upon us - it's ridiculous! I couldn't love it any more than I do! [Laughs]. What does that mean? I just don't know.

“I hate to admit this, but impatience, fear and my own envy of other people’s talent have been my most trusted taskmasters and teachers. I call it “Using the Dark Side of the Force”.”

I guess the short answer is “because I think it’s cool”. Heh, see - total goofbag answer! It’s funny, I don’t feel like I choose to do it, but rather I have to do it, if that makes sense.

I love the comment that you made about the creation of your piece “... with my father’s sword”: “Have you ever drawn something that feels like its drawing itself and you’re just kinda there, spectating?” It seems to me that this kind of effortless translation from your imagination down onto the page is what art should be about – although I can also appreciate that it doesn’t always work this way! Is this feeling something that you experience a lot while you’re working, or do you find that it goes the other way and you spend months struggling to perfect a single piece?

I find that both happen on every piece. The work you’re referring to was the most profound experience I’ve ever had though, I almost feel slimy taking credit for that one. I mean it felt like I was just there to hold a door open or something. I would kill to have every piece go like that... wait, I take that back. You really wouldn’t learn anything that way would you?

I hate to admit this, but impatience, fear and my own envy of other people’s talent have been my most trusted taskmasters and teachers. I call it “Using the Dark Side of the Force”. Seriously. When I sit down to draw, I encounter a lot of my own demons: lack of faith in my own skill; lack of education; that feeling that I’ll never, ever be



good enough or get anywhere no matter how hard I try. Thankfully I have learned to transform and focus those feelings into giving each work everything I've got, but it wasn't and isn't easy.

“It was like the manifestation of “anti-talent”; like I was channelling all of the lamest ideas ever... and then made a bowl.”

After you get beyond the point where you don't even try because you've berated yourself so

thoroughly, you start seeing yourself holding on to things in the work that aren't working. You start seeing it for what it is rather than what you want it to be. After this point great stuff starts to happen. But I'm not stupid enough to think I can command that to happen; if I could then every work would be without flaws, and that's just not the case.

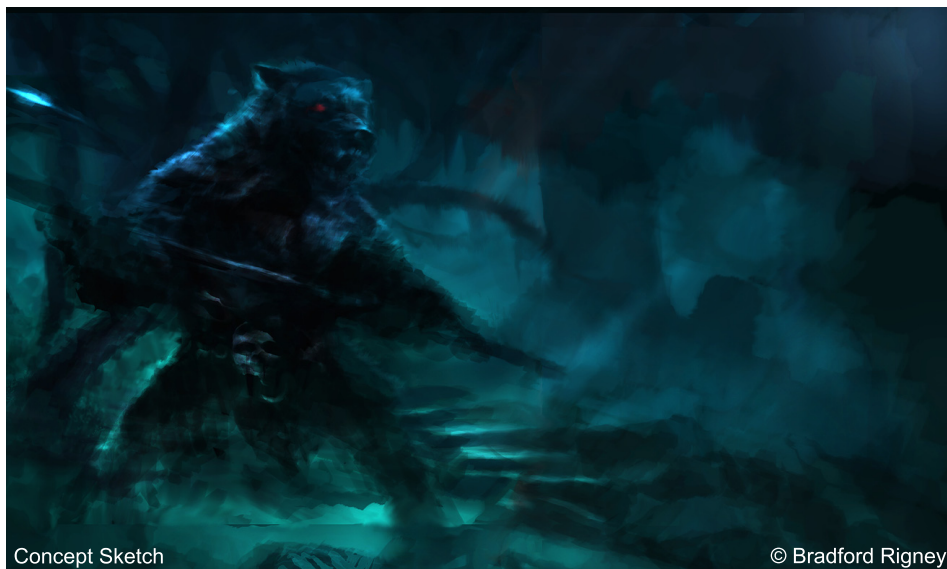
Okay, moving on from digital painting, I just have to ask you about sculpting. There's a great little note in your blog about how you once aspired to be a sculptor, but were forced to give

up on that dream after a particularly traumatic clay bowl related experience – is this something that you would still like to do in the future? And do you think that with the advances in modelling software recently, such as the emergence of Mudbox and ZBrush, you'll ever be able to realise this dream, even if only digitally?

Ah yes. That bowl. Yet another critically important, and necessary failure! This was the exact opposite of my later experience rendering “..with my father's sword”. It was like the manifestation of “anti-talent”; like I was channelling all of the lamest ideas ever... and then made a bowl.

In retrospect it really wasn't at all that devastating or dramatic, but it's a humorous reminder to just stick with what I can do well and do the best I can.

As for ZBrush and Mudbox? I've only just recently heard of ZBrush and while I think it's really cool looking, it's just not for me. I'd rather focus on trying to get my 2D art to look like it was done in ZBrush rather than learning ZBrush, even for giggles. I'd feel like it was time I could have spent getting better at my chosen craft.



Concept Sketch

© Bradford Rigney



One last question to round things off: I get the impression, both from your website and what you've said in this interview, that feedback is really important to you and that you really appreciate all the people who have shown an interest in your art. Yet in some ways, it also seems that you don't quite feel you deserve all the attention you've been getting recently and that it's like you're waiting to wake up one morning and find it's all been a weirdly wonderful dream! Is this an accurate interpretation or am I way off the mark? And if so, why do you feel like this when all the evidence around you points to how good your art is?

No, you're not way off at all, you're right on the money... frighteningly so in fact. Geez, come to think of it, it really does feel like that: a weirdly wonderful dream that I'm convinced is going to abruptly end! [Laughs].

“I’m a recovering alcoholic and have been sober for 12 wonderful years. I’ve been homeless. I’ve been a thief.”

But I don't think it's a matter of feeling unworthy of the attention, in all honesty. How do I put this? I guess it's because I just don't feel like it's all about me. I feel like it's about the interaction between viewer and their imagination and that I'm just a bit player in the whole thing, a delivery boy. I don't mean to be overly self-deprecating, but I guess I just feel that I didn't give myself the ability to draw, it was given to me on loan. Sure, I worked hard to improve my skills but I reckon that's the least I can do for even having the ability to begin with.

I don't have an issue with taking credit, I don't think. I'll take credit when it's appropriate because I totally busted my hump to get where I am and I highly encourage anyone else to do the same for their goals in art. I get richly inspired by the reaction I get to the work, and the people who enjoy it tell me they get inspired,





which inspires me even more in turn, and so on, and so on. It's totally a two way street and I never forget that.

There are also so many other things that are contributing to my mindset. Before I seriously started pursuing my art again, I had come from an incredibly hard road in life. I'm a recovering alcoholic and have been sober for 12 wonderful years. I've been homeless. I've been a thief. I've prayed for death. I'm no stranger to a life poisoned by self-centred and selfish thinking, where everyone who doesn't agree with your world view is obviously trying to destroy you. Sure that sounds dramatic and paranoid but it's what I came from.

So in a nutshell, I'm extremely grateful and maybe that's where the reluctance to take credit comes from, because I didn't get to where I am by myself. I've had people carrying me the whole way while I just sat there like the goofy fanboy that I am and kept drawing!

Well good luck for the future, Brad, and thanks for chatting to us!

Bradford Rigney

For more work by this artist please visit:

<http://cryptcrawler.deviantart.com/>

Or contact them at:

cryptcrawler@comcast.net

Interviewed by: Jo Hargreaves

LEARN HOW TO DESIGN ENVIRONMENTS FROM THE PROS



James Clyne

“ James Clyne is a master when it comes to translating his inner worlds of gigantic structures and machines. His smart construction approach, based on a very open abstract process, gives to his productions a very original feel unseen anywhere else. ”

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"Like many of my paintings I just start out painting in the middle of the canvas without having any idea of what to paint, then I start seeing shapes and whoops an idea is born."

ROBIN CLAUSSON

Having featured his artwork on more than one occasion in The Gallery of the 2DArtist Magazine we felt it only fair that we get to know a bit more about the this remarkable self taught artist.



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ROBIN OLAUSSON

Hi Robin, you've graced the pages of 2DArtist for many an issue now, so it's a pleasure to finally chat with you. Could you tell us a bit about yourself and also what peaked your interest in digital art?

Thanks Chris. I've always been interested in art but never really started doing it until after my first year at university. The school wasn't anything for me so I quit and started educating myself in art while working part time in a factory.



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It was hard going but if you want something bad you got to put the effort into it. Now I'm studying at another school here in Sweden called School of future entertainment, mostly 3D related stuff here and not much of an art school but I do get some time to work on my 2D here as well.

You mentioned that you taught yourself art. How did you go about doing this and what advice would you give anyone out there that wants to go down the 'self teach' route?

Anatomy wise I studied from books like, George B. Bridgeman 'Constructive Anatomy', Richer Hale 'Artistic Anatomy', Burne Hogarth









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'Dynamic Figure Drawing' and also from movies by Glen Vilppu, Riven Phoenix 'The Structure of Man', all really good stuff and if you are serious about your art and want to draw characters 'The Structure of Man' is a must! There is other good stuff out there for other topics as well like the Gnomon workshop DVD's. I strongly recommend getting out on forums like "conceptart.org" and post your work for criticism it really helps you push it to the next level and keep you motivated. I also would suggest trying other mediums like paper and pen, sculpting and painting it helps the creative part much more then you think.



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Looking over your portfolio your artwork has progressed from a very loose illustrative approach and developed a controlled concept style which can be seen in some of your latest pieces. Is this the way you see your artwork heading to in the future or are you just trying to develop a wider repertoire?

I think this is a matter of what knowledge I possessed during that particular time. I started out doing so much research and studying of technical stuff related to art and to relax and paint something completely different I did many very loose paintings out of my imagination. It's hard to paint something creative when you are into the technical stuff so that was my way of hanging in there I guess. Now days I'm working my way into the area of art that I'm really interested in, more realistic concept art.







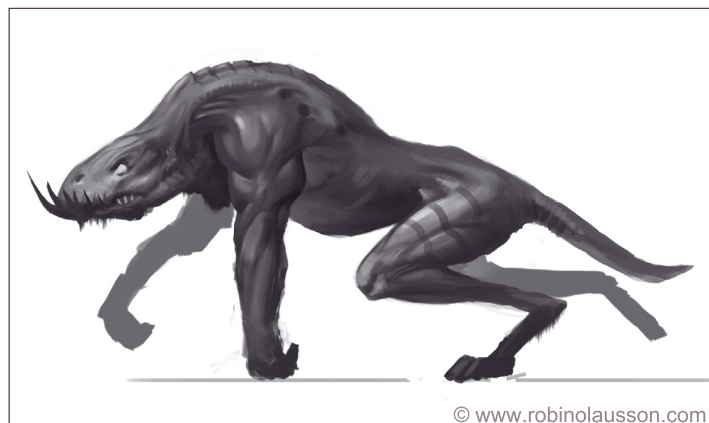


Concept art you say, that's funny as I've just been looking at your image "Dungeon" which you created for an upcoming game demo. Am I right in saying that you would like to head down the game art path or would you like to work producing concept art for films as well?

That right. My first goal is to head down the game industry but I won't limit myself to anything and in the future I hope to try as much as possible.

You've painted a lot of really interesting scenes/environments each one different from the next. For instance one of my favourite images in your portfolio is 'Yeah', could describe the idea and inspiration behind it?

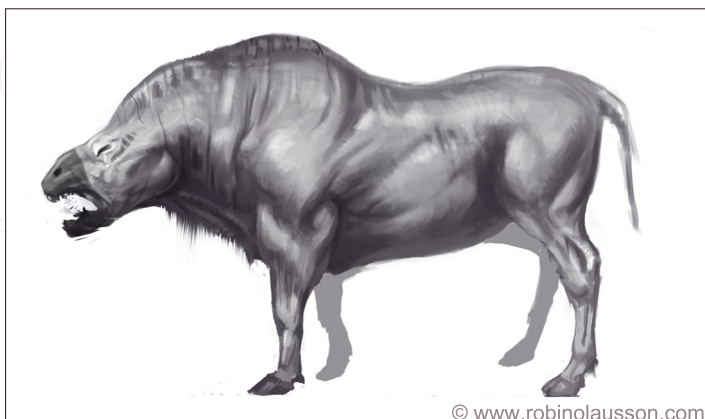
I'm glad you like it, though I'm not very happy with it myself. It's funny you



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ask the idea behind it or where the inspiration came from because I do not really know the answer myself. Like many of my paintings I just start out painting in the middle of the canvas without having any idea of what to paint, then I start seeing shapes and whoops an idea is born. This image is actually a milestone where I learned a lot of new things. I started out playing with textures and lightning in a way that I never tried before and I learned a lot doing so.

From doodling in the middle of your canvas to a finished piece, how long on an average do you spend on a piece before you class it as finalized?

This depends on how much detail and how polished the piece is but in



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average a picture takes around 4 hours if there are quite some details in it.

What has been your most accomplished piece of artwork to date?

This is a hard one, some of my earlier work which has a completely different style seems to be popular too many people but for me I have to say that my later work like "corridor of horror", "cave" and the image bot industry is more my taste. If I have to choose one of them I would say bot industry.

So why "bot industry" over the other pieces?

Well it was probably one of the most fun peaces in a long time to work on and I didn't struggle very much with getting it as good as I wanted. It's a pretty clean piece but although roughen up by the scratches and textures. I like how the light came out a how cold the material on the floor feels.

On your cgsociety blog, you mentioned you're working hard on studying anatomy (though this

was posted a few years back). How has this been going and have you become familiar with it yet?

I do not update that blog very often and that statement is really old as you said and at the moment I don't study anatomy at all but sure during that period I learned a lot but anatomy is something you got to keep up and keep studying and you never get complete really. I sure have much more to learn.

I've just been given a book on anatomy myself for my birthday, is there any tips that you can give me that you picked up whilst you were learning?

Good choice! Try understanding the structure of the bones before going on with the muscles; otherwise it's easy to do "rubber figures". Keep everything simple and simplify the major muscle parts in the beginning and start out with Andrew Loomis stick figures. When you study the muscles keep in mind where they attach (both beginning and where they ends) When you know roughly how the bone structure looks

like it's much easier to attach the muscles on their right place since they attach to the bones. Compare where they attach from front, side and back view to get a gasp of how they actually look in 3D.

Well it has been a really pleasure talking with you and I wish you all the best for you future endeavours.

Thank you very much; it's an honour to be featured in your magazine! Keep up the good work.

Robin Olausson

For more work by this artist please visit

<http://www.robinolausson.com/>

<http://ewkn.deviantart.com/>

or contact them at

tv1000@spray.se

Interviewed By : Chris Perrins



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SKETCHBOOK OF JOHN WU

We have admired John's work for some time and featured an interview with him two years ago, in the April 07 issue of 2DArtist. So we thought it only fitting to explore the ideas behind his images and delve into his sketchbook.

SKETCHBOOK OF
JOHN WU

CALLING ALL CARS!

Here are some *Calling All Cars!* sketches created for the in-game trophy (Fig.01 & Fig.02). The one with the gold bullion was to announce that the game had gone gold – meaning finalised and ready for download. It was the first mediocre game I worked on, but I had loads of fun doing it.

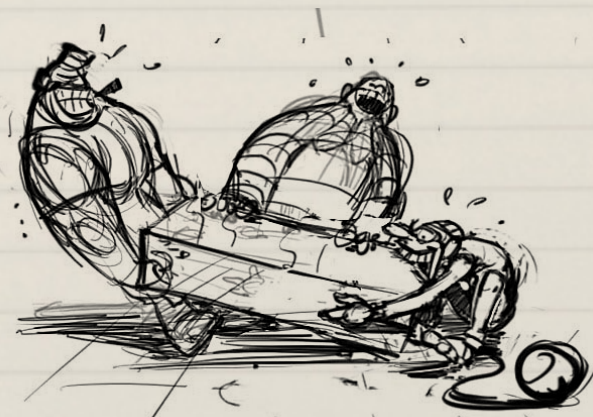


Fig.02

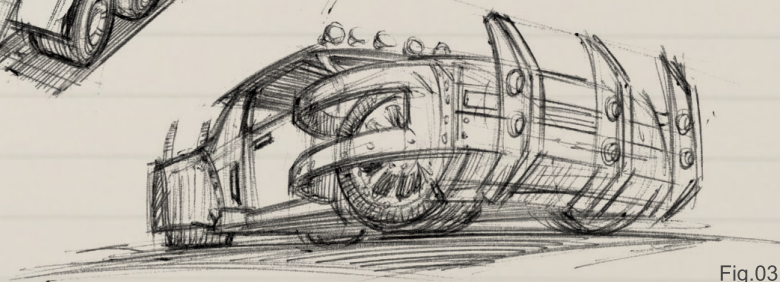
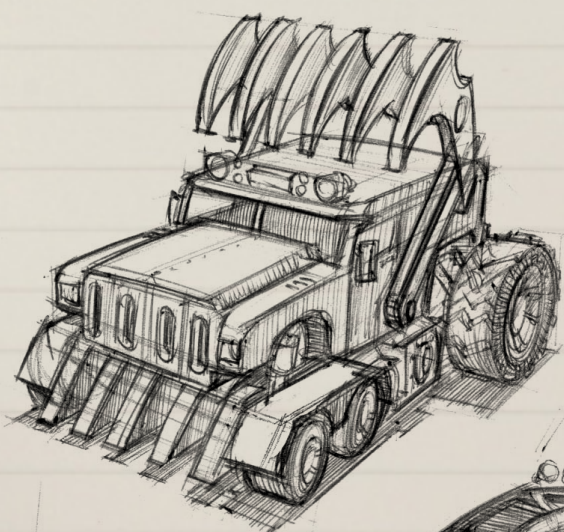


Fig.03

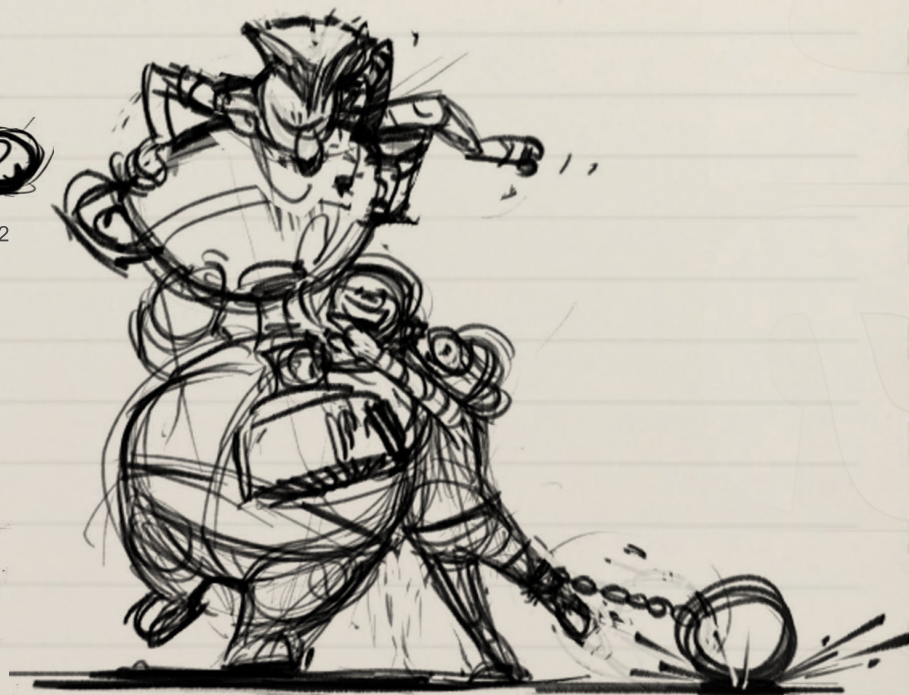


Fig.01

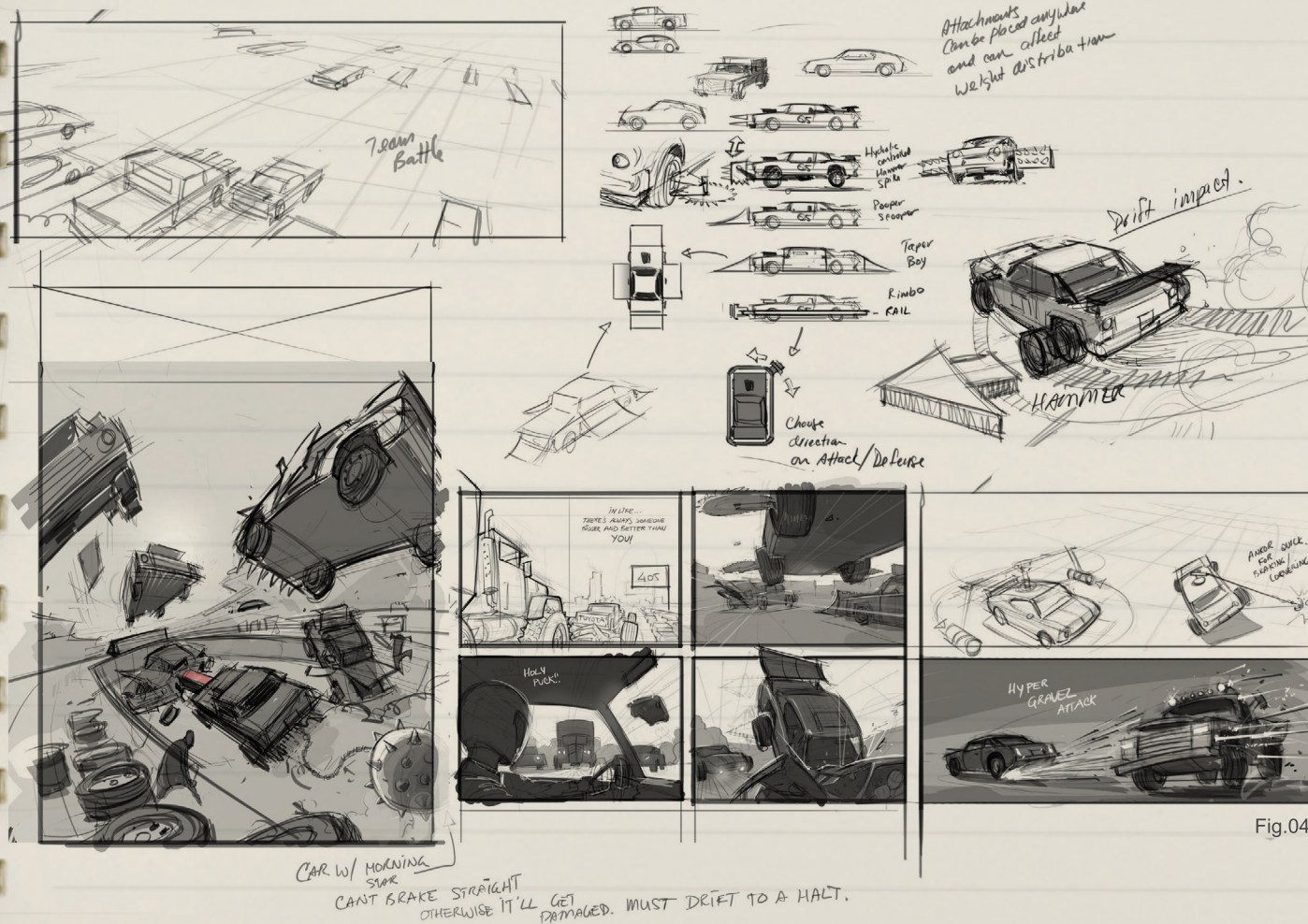


Fig.04

Aside from doing artwork, I also contribute to game design and come up with game mechanics or level ideas (Fig.03 – Fig.06).

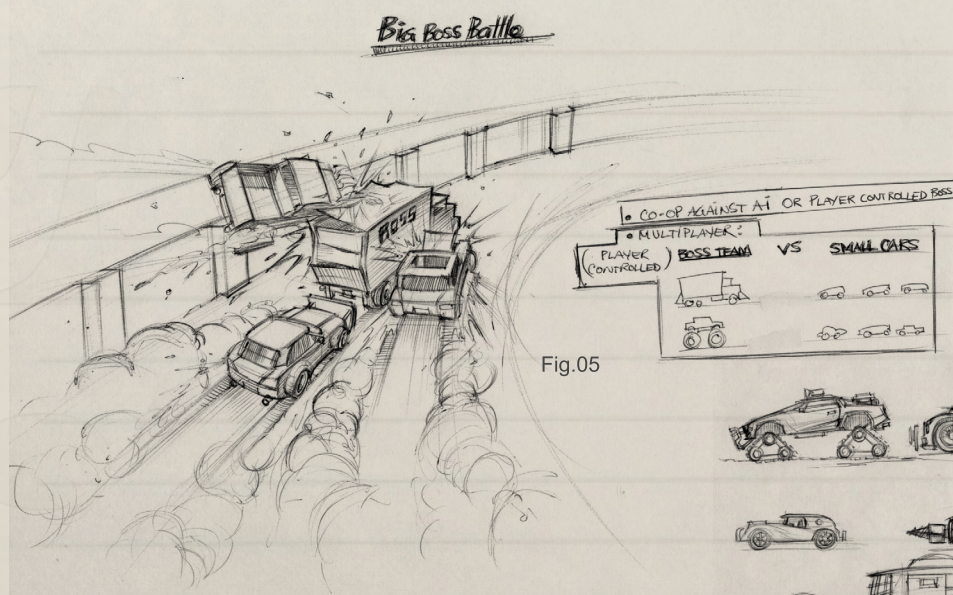


Fig.05

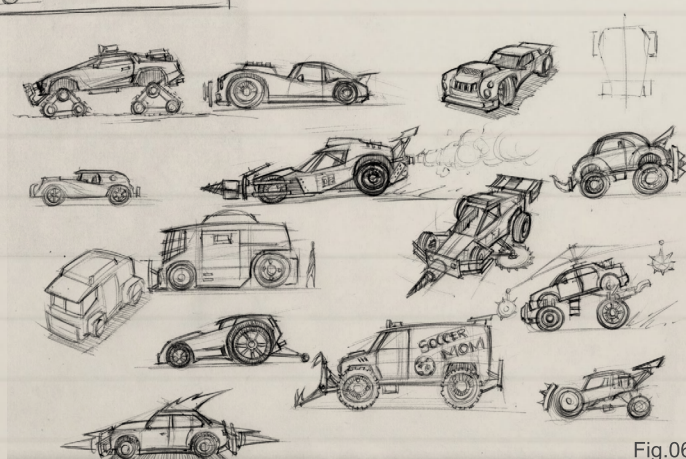


Fig.06

These character sketches were created for proportion study purposes (**Fig.07**). Drawing characters isn't my forte, but I do enjoy brainstorming styles whenever I can.

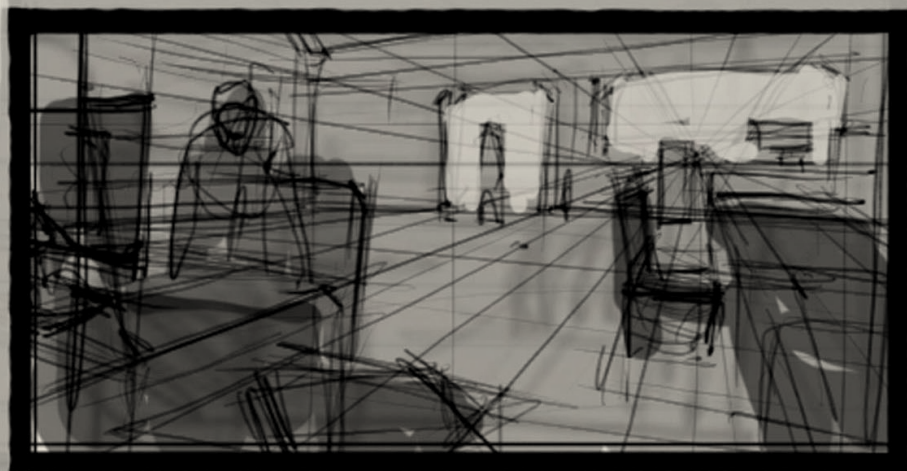


INTERIORS

This is an interior design demo I did for one of my classes at the Concept Design Academy (Fig.08a - c & Fig.09). The demo briefly describes the process I go through when designing interior spaces. Personally, I find it more difficult working on interiors than exteriors, because scale plays a huge factor. If things are "off", it can make objects appear as if they're floating, or out of proportion. Even the perspective becomes tricky, especially when objects are in different angles

DESIGNING INTERIORS

- 1) Sketch (brainstorm)
- 2) Sketch 2nd pass w/ rough perspective
- 3) Create grid
- 4) Enlarge sketch, fix it, and add to it
- 5) Block in values
- 6) Add light source(s)



/ Fig.08a

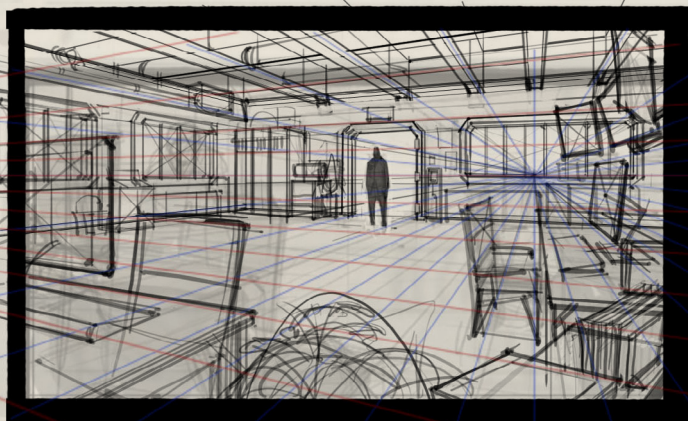


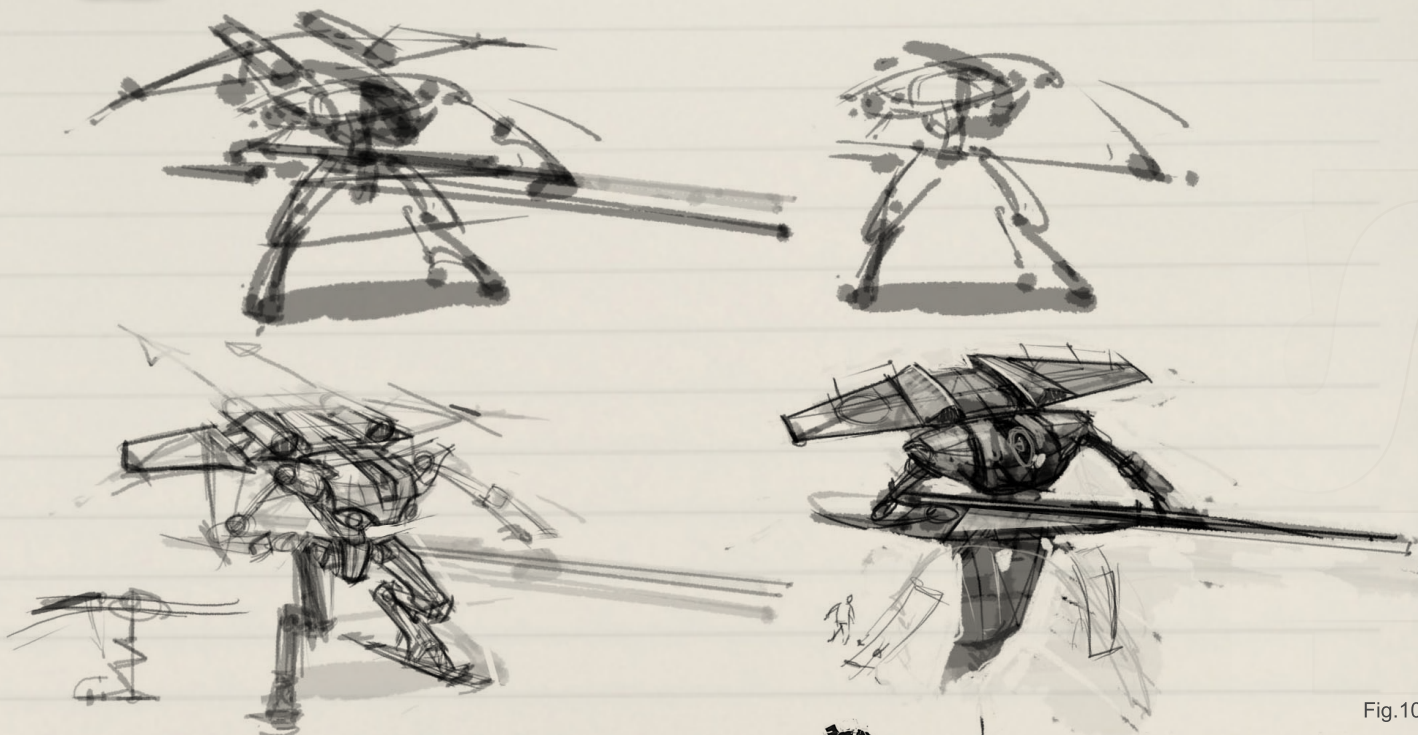
Fig.08b



Fig.08c



Fig.09



MECHS

What can I say? I love them – mechs! I also taught a mech design class at the Concept Design Academy. I'm a firm believer that form follows function. However, I also believe that function can follow form as long as you understand how to solve the basic inner workings. For instance, if you

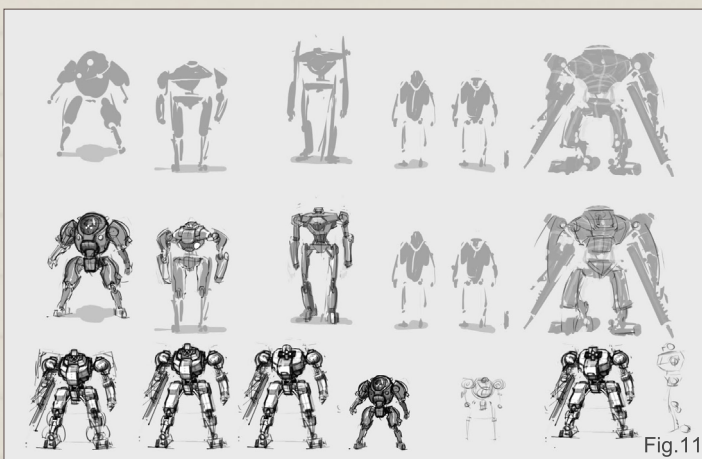


Fig.11

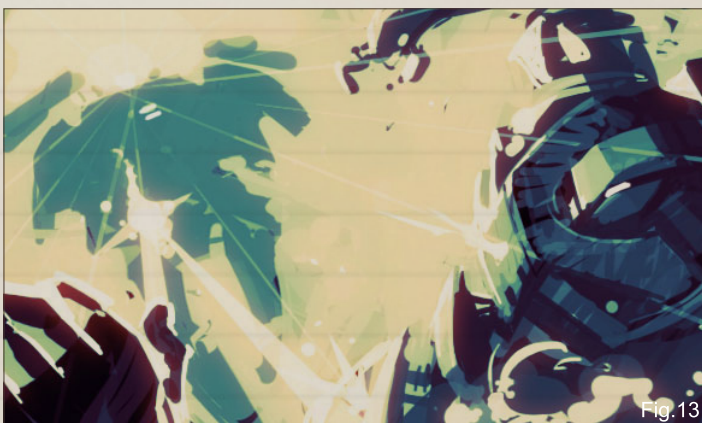


Fig.13

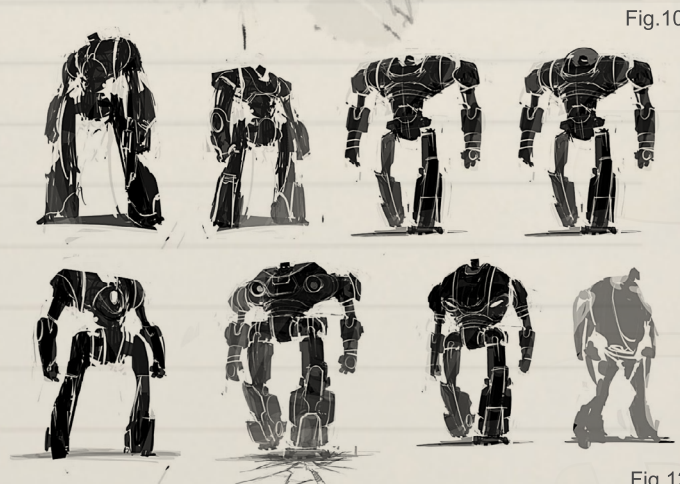


Fig.10

Fig.12

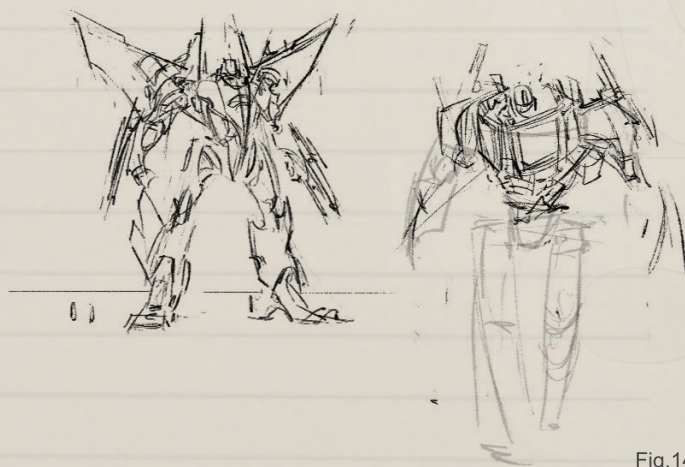


Fig.14

know a car has four tyres, a hood, cab, and a trunk, then your design is already half complete. The rest is just a question of design aesthetics – or the wrapper. So for mech designs, I always recommend my students understand the principles of hydraulics and different joint types (Fig.10 – Fig.14).

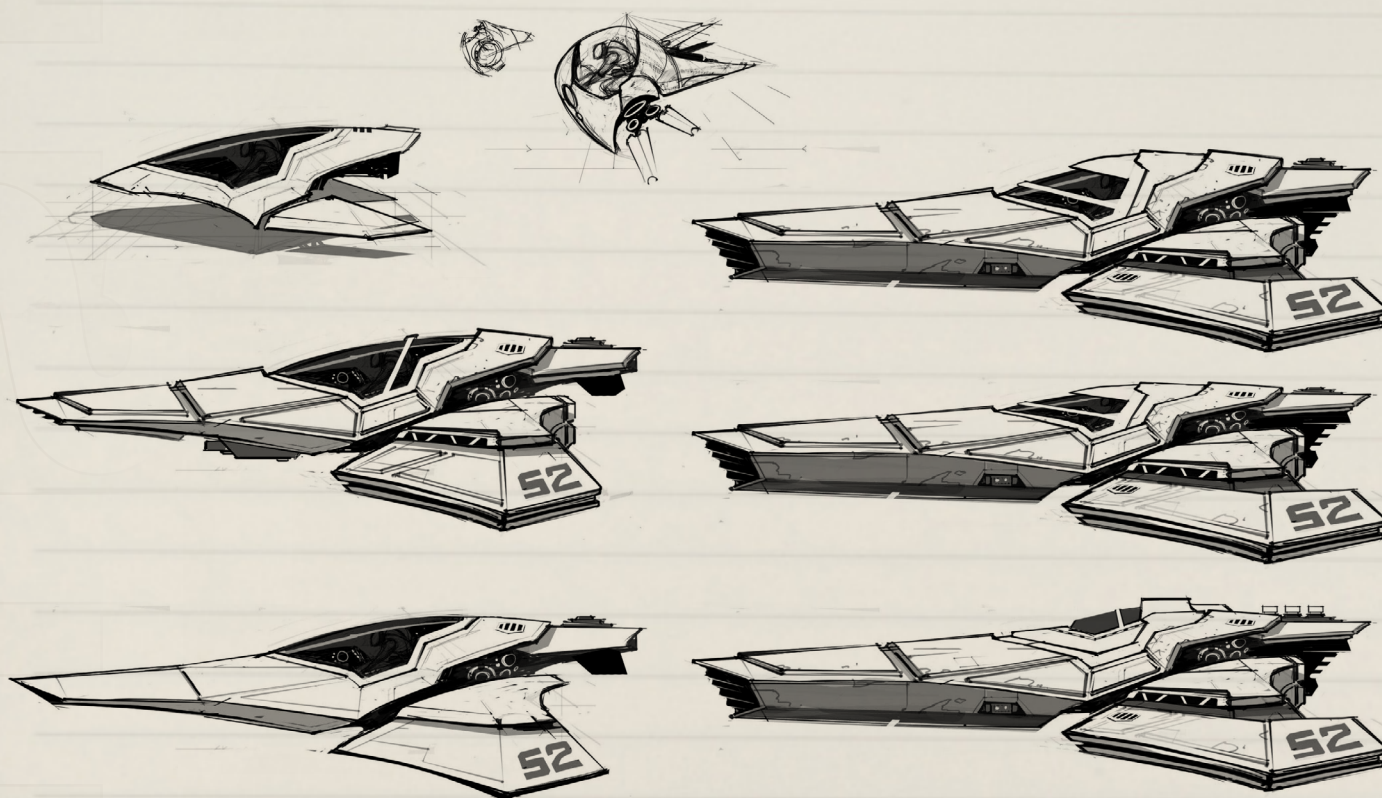


Fig.15

SHIPS

Here are some ship designs inspired by the game, *Wipeout* (Fig.15).

And these are some generic filler ship designs for one of the Ratchet and Clank games (I can't remember which one, exactly) (Fig.16).

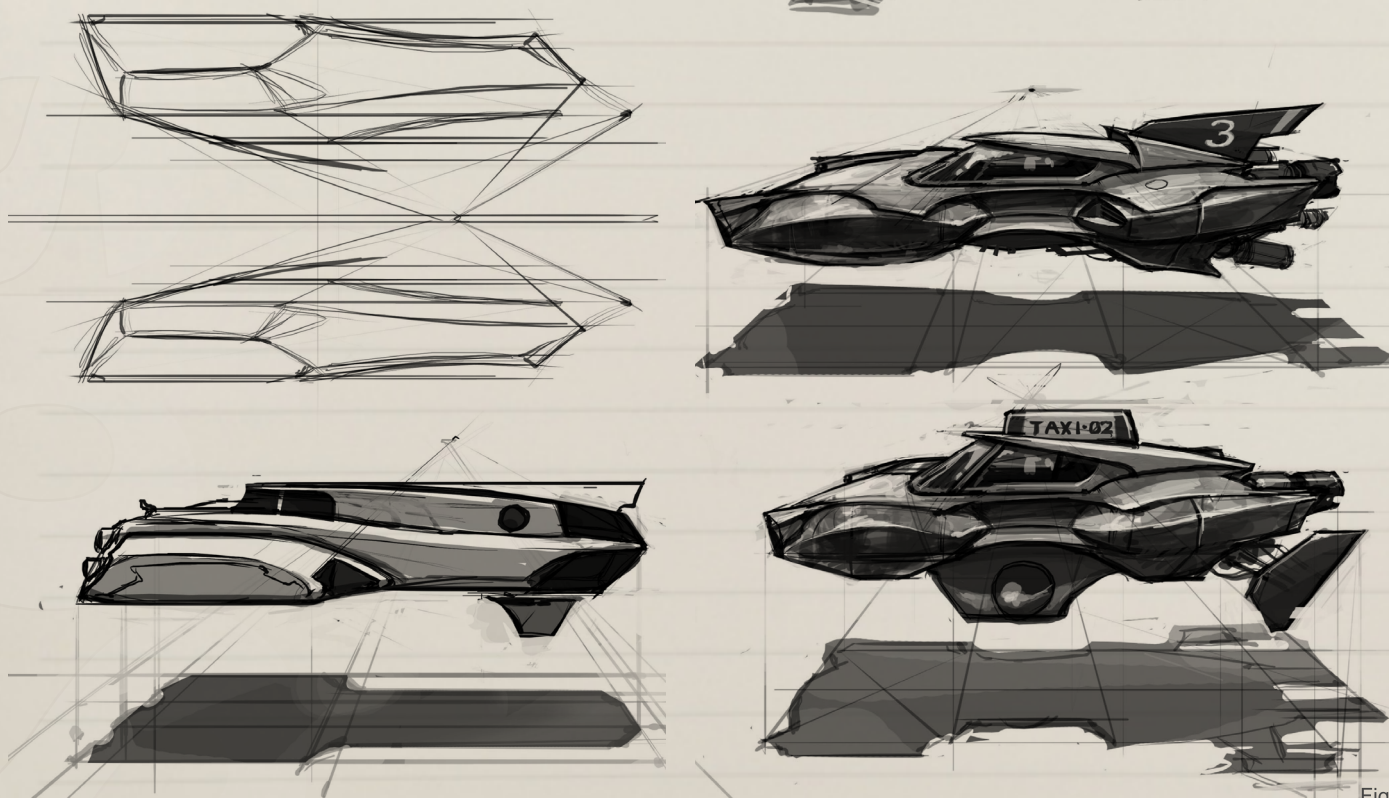


Fig.16

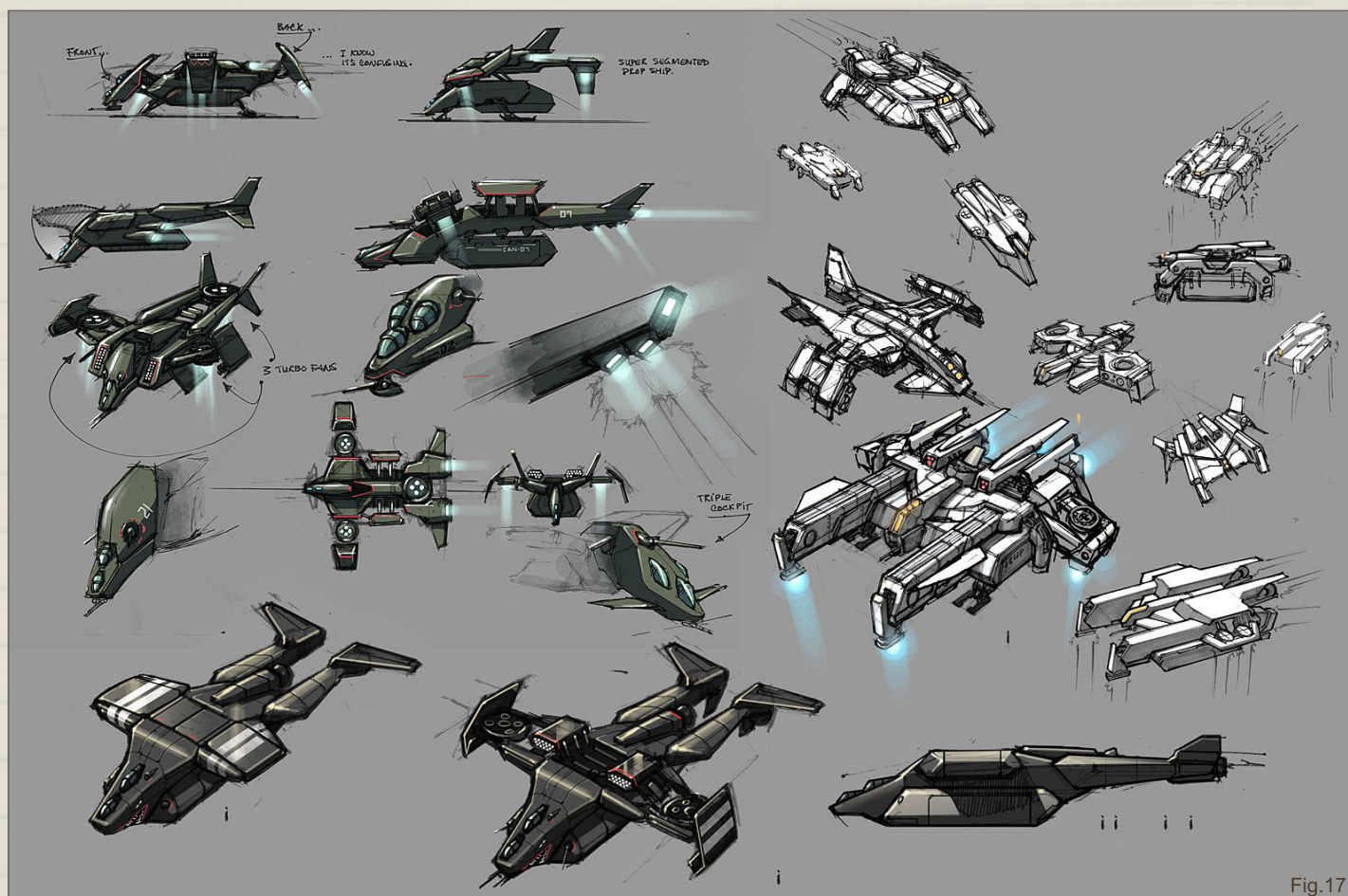
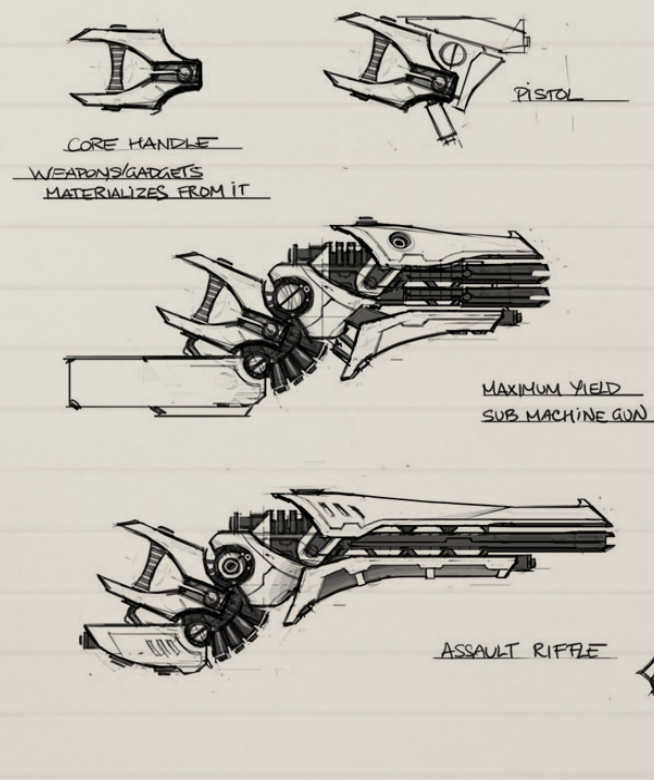


Fig.17

These sketches were inspired by Syd Mead's drop ship design from the movie, *Aliens* (Fig.17). I've always loved the fact that the ship needed to perform atmospheric re-entry, so the weapons and gears needed to be concealed during those heated moments, and then pop open when it's safe to do so.

WEAPONS/GADGET REPLICATOR



WEAPONS

I designed these weapons for a project that never made it through the chopping block. The idea was to create a base weapon that can be enhanced modularly, similar to various military weapons.

JOHN WU

For more information please visit:

<http://www.therealjohnwu.com/>

Or contact:

therealjohnwu@hotmail.com

Fig.18



THE GALLERY

This month we feature:

Naoto Hattori
Ioan Dumitrescu aka Jonone
David Munoz Velazquez
Mathieu Leyssenne, 'Ani'
Matthew Ellis
Nykolai Aleksander
Andrée Wallin
Alex Broeckel
Neville Dsouza
Eytan Zana

Shh

Ioan Dumitrescu aka Jonone

jononespo@yahoo.com



Plane Wreck House

Matthew Ellis

<http://www.mattpainting.com>

matellis17@gmail.com



Captain Napalm

Mathieu Leyssenne, 'Ani'

<http://www.aniii.com/>

ani@aniii.com



ANI

Last Century NYC

Alex Broeckel

<http://www.alexbroeckel.com>

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Fatal Attraction

Neville Dsouza

nwiz22@yahoo.com



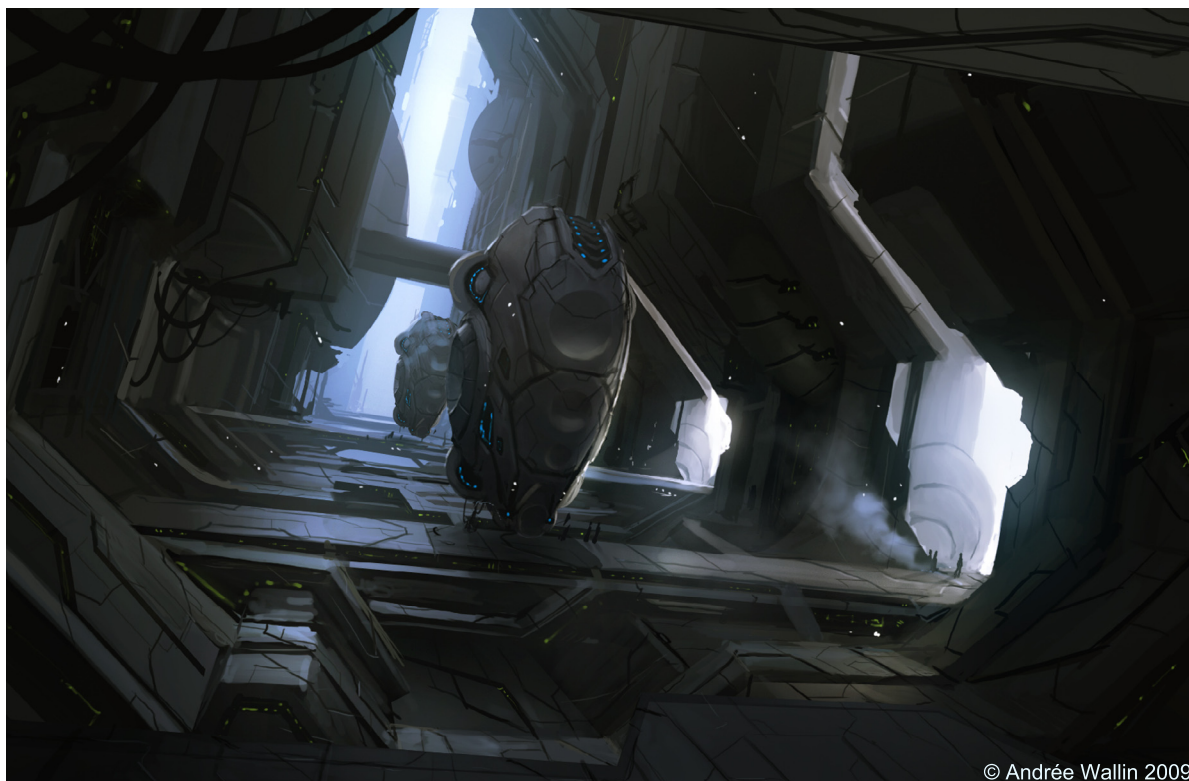
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Sci-fi Valley

Andrée Wallin

<http://www.andreewallin.com>

andree.wallin@gmail.com



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Hovercraft Parrot

David Munoz Velazquez

<http://www.munozvelazquez.com/>

munozvelazquez@gmail.com



Shop Interior

Eytan Zana

<http://www.Ezdraws.com>

the.quick.sketch@gmail.com

Image by Eytan Zana, www.Ezdraws.com





[Y]

Nykolai Aleksander

<http://www.admemento.com/>

x@admemento.com



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naoto@naotohattori.com



2d artist next month

Interviews

Don Seegmiller

Kekai Kotaki

Articles

Sketchbook of Chris Thunig

Tutorials

Vehicle Painting Series

by Dwayne Vance

Speed Painting:

"The sleepy village never saw the
horror approaching"

by Nick Oroc & Nathaniel West

New!

Anatomy of a Painting:

Different Means to one End

by Nykolai Aleksander

Galleries

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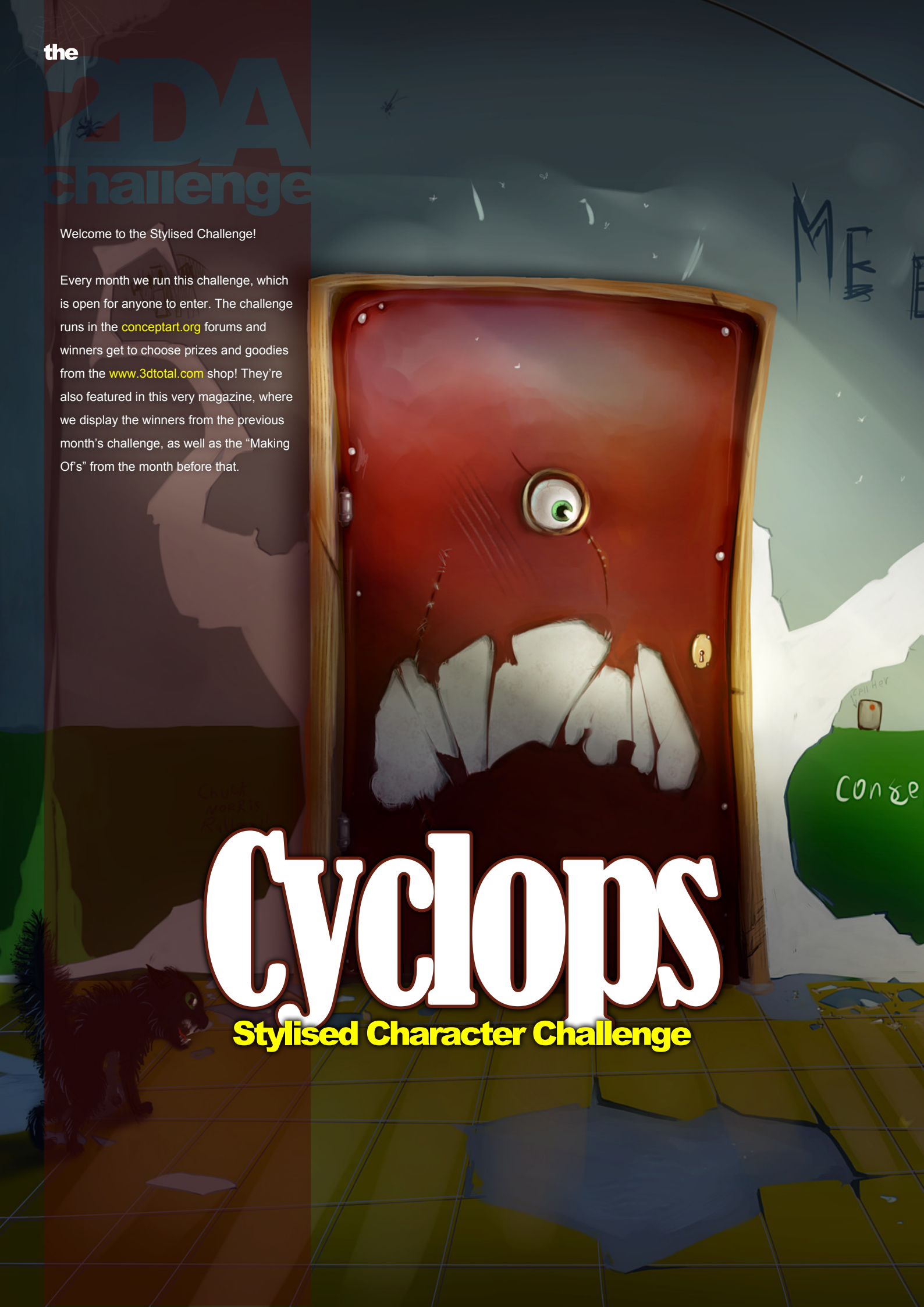
3DA challenge

Welcome to the Stylised Challenge!

Every month we run this challenge, which is open for anyone to enter. The challenge runs in the conceptart.org forums and winners get to choose prizes and goodies from the www.3dtotal.com shop! They're also featured in this very magazine, where we display the winners from the previous month's challenge, as well as the "Making Of's" from the month before that.

Cyclops

Stylised Character Challenge



Stylised Challenge Cyclops

The Challenge

Welcome to the Super Stylised Monthly Challenge. Each month we select a theme and post some images in the **Forum Thread** for reference. All you have to do is to create a 2D image in line with this theme in a stylised / abstract / cartoon style, whilst keeping your image instantly recognisable. We wanted to publish some content in 2D Artist magazine on how to create stylised images, such as you see in the many feature films and cartoon galleries. We thought this regular competition might bring in just the images and "Making Of's" that we need, whilst giving away great prizes and exposure. This month's theme was "**Cyclops**". Here you can see the top placed entries, as voted for by the public.

9th



Glen Ostrander - Ostrander

glen_ostrander@yahoo.com
http://rhinohidestudios.blogspot.com/

10th



Ircha

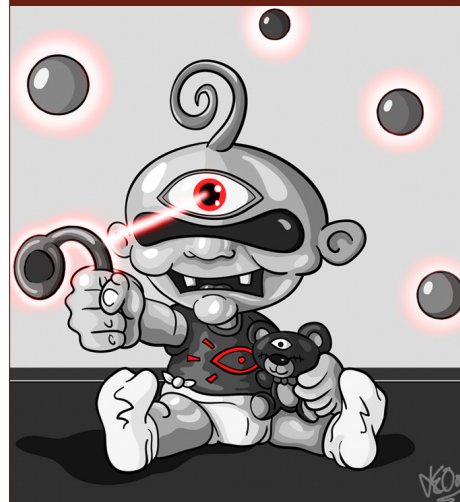
8th



Jason Smith - Macaruba

info@macaruba.com
http://www.macaruba.com

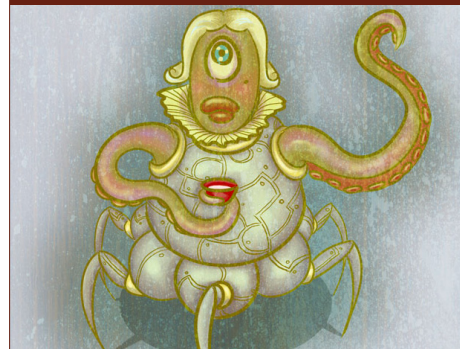
9th



Leo - Blackcherry

leo@almasy.zzn.com
http://www.biscuitofdoom.net

7th



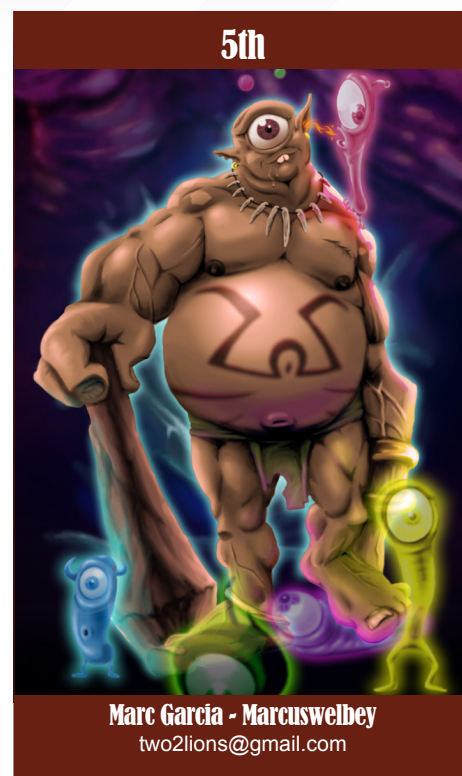
Cookiedough

7th



Liran Szeiman - Liranz

liransz@gmail.com
http://liransz.deviantart.com/



What are we looking for?

Funny and humorous entries which break the theme down to its most recognisable components; emphasise these in whichever ways you think best, and render your stylised / abstract / cartoon masterpiece. The rules are pretty laid back: please submit 1 x 3D render (minor post work is OK); its up to you if you want to have a background; include some graphical elements or text on your image. Renders of the 800 pixel dimension sound about right, but the winners will be featured in 2DArtist Magazine, so if you can create some higher res images too then all the better!

There will be one competition per month, with the deadline being the end of the month (GMT). For a valid entry, just make sure your final image is posted in the main competition thread before the deadline. We require the top three winners to submit "Making Of" overview articles that will be shown on either 3DTotal or in 2DArtist Magazine. These need to show the stages of your creation - different elements and some brief explanation text - of why, and



3rd



Oriol Muñoz Anguera - Urih pta2
urih.pta2@gmail.com
<http://www.urih-pta2.blogspot.com>

2nd



Adrian Zhang - Gnahz
adrian.zhangzhiwei@gmail.com
<http://gnahz.deviantart.com/>

1st



Oleg, with Inesse Kiryanova - Oritey
<http://oritey.ru/>
oritey@gmail.com

how, you did what you did. We will format this into some nice-looking pages to give you some great exposure, and us some quality content. Each competition will have one main thread which starts with the brief at the top. All entrants should post all WIP's, give feedback and generally laugh at the crazy ideas that are emerging each month...

Challenge Thread

The entire **Cyclops** competition can be viewed **Here**

The current challenge at the voting stage is:

Centaur

The current challenge taking place is:

Jester (Fool!)

To join the next challenge, or to view previous, and / or current entries, please visit:

www.conceptart.org

Or contact: **Lynette@zoopublishing.com**

Making Of's

Here are the "Making Of's" from last month's top three winning entries...

3rd Daveneale

Software Used: Photoshop

I decided to take a bit of a different approach to this image than I usually would. My usual workflow involves using quite a few layers in Photoshop – something that I think arises from a lack of confidence in the choices I'm making along the way when drawing a picture. A lot of the time, especially if an image is going well, I find it intimidating to paint over strokes/

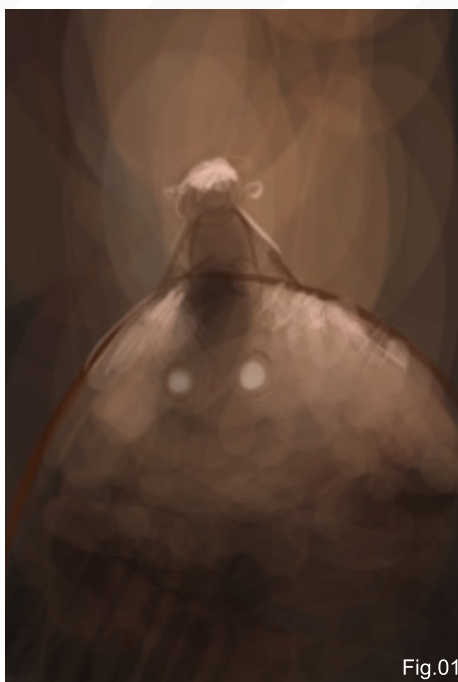


Fig.01

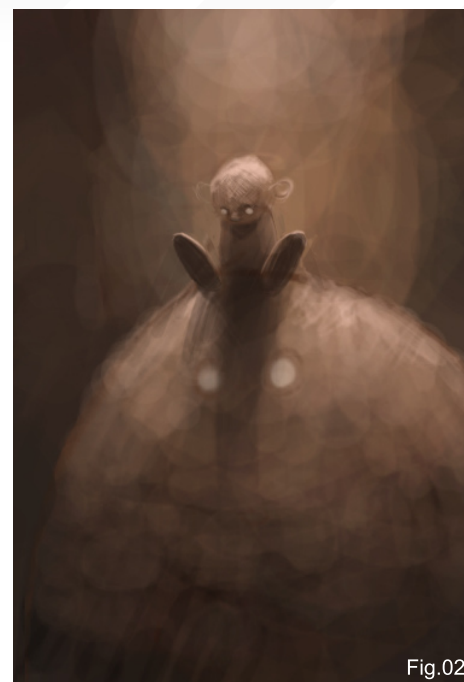


Fig.02



Fig.03

areas I like, just in case I lose areas I am happy with. This is something I've been attempting to overcome recently by working with fewer layers and merging things often. I think I ended up with a few extra layers at the end, but for most of the process I was working with 2-3 layers.

I started out painting in monochrome – something that helps me concentrate on the form, rather than having both form and colour to worry about. I decided on a triangular composition – something I use a lot to keep an image weighted nicely – and just laid the basic shapes in, concentrating on lighting as much as I could.

My initial thumbnail sketch was 200 by 282 pixels, which I worked on zoomed-out so I could see the whole image all at once (**Fig.01**). As soon as I'd got my basic idea down, I increased the size to 400 by 564 pixels so I could get a little more detail in. I had a bit of a play with how the boy would look here, and also added a slight cast shadow (**Fig.02**).

Again, I increased the canvas size to 1418 by 2000 – the final size – and began paying attention to the eyes of the Sasquatch, trying to give it a kind of innocence. I also added a



Fig.04

few random brushstrokes with a custom brush, although these were mostly lost in the final image (**Fig.03**). Recently I've been trying to use the basic hard round brush in Photoshop, as I often find that I use custom brushes as a crutch.

I then moved into colour, using the Colour blending mode in the layers palette, as well as painting directly onto the image (**Fig.04**). I think something that is really important with colour



Fig.05

is to have hue shifts – so rather than using just blue, having a green-blue and maybe some purple hues in there as well. I feel this makes things a lot more visually interesting (**Fig.05**).

I continued adding details with my hard round brush, concentrating on the heads of both my characters and purposefully leaving other areas less well rendered. I've heard many people say that when painting an image, leaving a bit "less



Fig.06

finished" can help give you areas of interest, as well as cut down on production time – the level of detail in one area will suggest that the rest of the image is finished to the same level.

I decided the boy's foot was at an awkward angle so I rectified that (**Fig.06**). Something I think is important here is that even though I was getting towards being done, I still wasn't being too precious about things. It's so easy to sit with an image, and be reluctant to change things that have been consistent since you started out. When things need changing – change them!

I added some foreground branches here, just to give some depth to the picture and also to provide a nicer mix of values (**Fig.07**). I always like to have a good shift from lights to darks in my images.

Finally, I decided that the branch was a bit intrusive so I chopped that out. I also thought that the fur was looking a little muddy so I lightened him up, changed his mouth a little so he was a little happier, and also changed the direction of the boy's shadow to correspond more with the direction of the light source (**Fig.08**). I think lighting and form are the most important factors in producing an image that

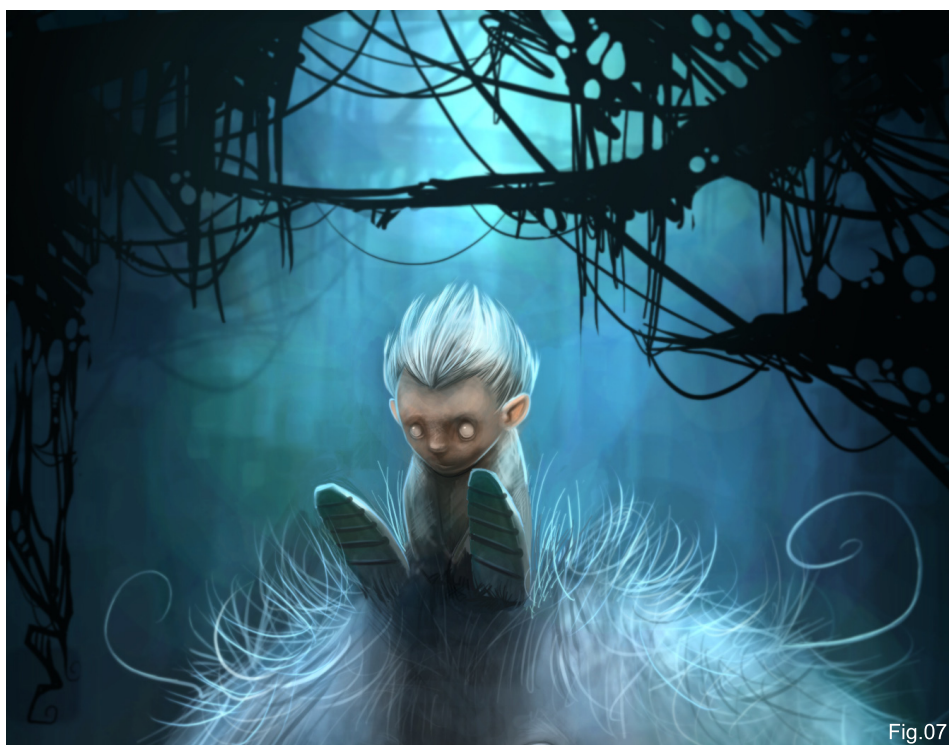


Fig.07

reads well for the viewer; it's something I'm always struggling to improve on, but with a lot of study and plenty of practice, it's something I'm confident I can continue to grasp a little better.

Dave Neale

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2nd Ruth2m

Software Used: Photoshop

I am so happy to once again be sharing the "making of" my illustration. I hope to be able to get across to you what I have learned since the last time I wrote for 2DArtist magazine. With every new challenge, I try a new technique or way of working, and this is helping me to improve a lot. Likewise, I hope it will also be able to help someone else.

Sketches & Ideas

When the Bigfoot topic was suggested, the first thing that sprang to my mind was a Yeti. Looking up the subject on the Internet I found that Bigfoot and Yetis are something like cousins; they both come from the same roots. So I said to myself: Let's make a snow Bigfoot!

Taking this idea as a starting point, I imagined a Bigfoot in all kind of snow situations: in a ski lift or with a huge foot in the foreground about to step on a flower in the middle of the snow. What



Fig.01

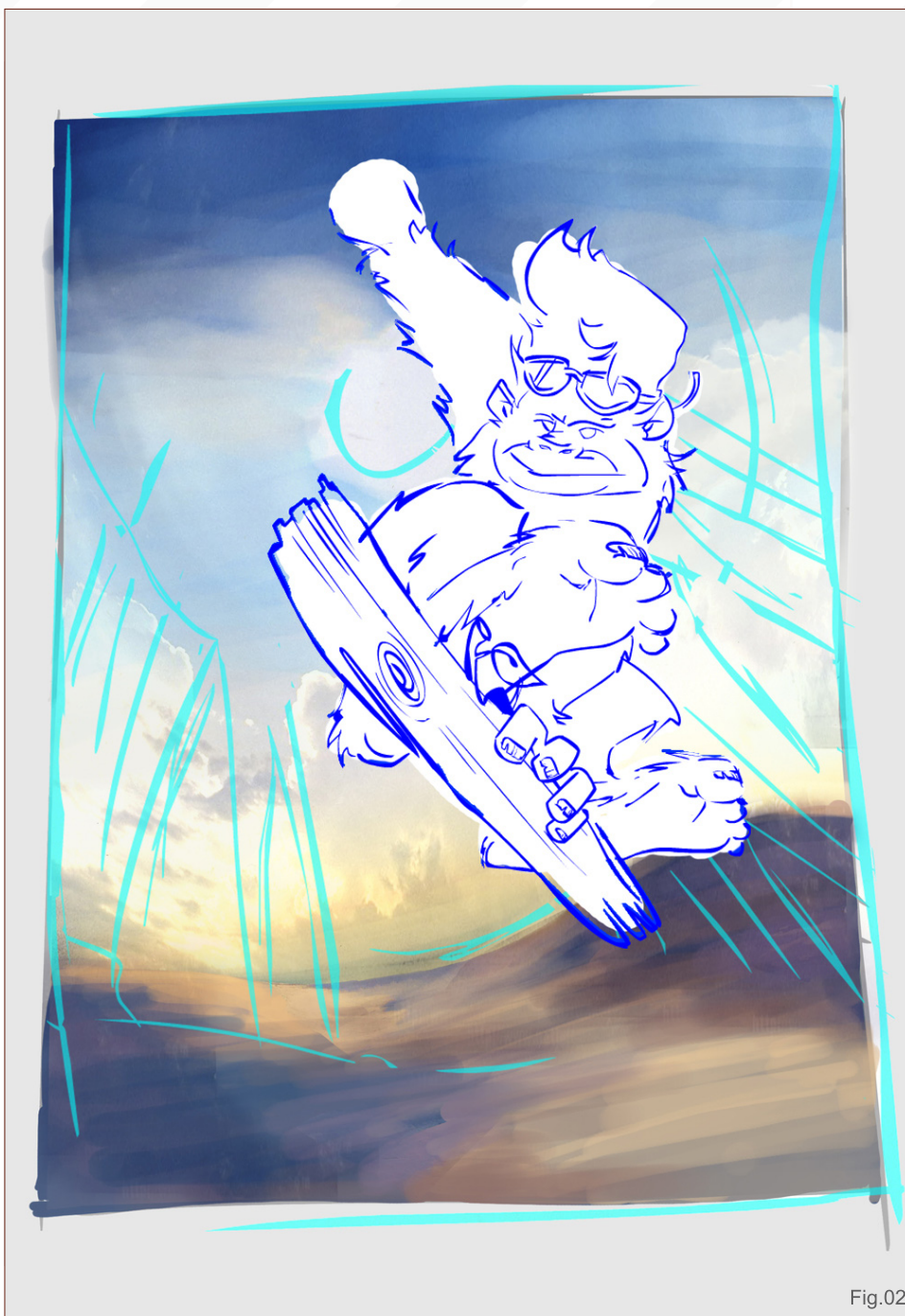


Fig.02

I finally chose was the one we can see here – a snowboarding Bigfoot (**Fig.01**). Right from the beginning I liked the idea of big feet, so I came up with the board being his feet, but it was quite complicated to represent as the stand would be very forced, so I ended up equipping the Bigfoot with a homemade snowboard – this way it finally turned out a bit more rudimentary.

Background

To start, I got down to making the background (**Fig.02**). I wanted to paint a very simple

background in order to make Bigfoot stand out above everything. Firstly I thought of a background full of trees, but I didn't want to add so many details and I opted instead for a wide sky with some small trees in the background.

Study of Light & Shadows

In this step, I wanted to show the background colours and their treatment based on areas made with wide strokes, and also the character, as later I changed a few details of the face and the arm. In this illustration I again used a



Fig.03

study of light and shadow, as in the previous illustrations it gave me a good result. This system helps you to face the white/blank sheet syndrome – not worrying about colours, only thinking about the position of light and dark areas, as well as volume.

For this character I had very little time, which is why the study of volume was not as detailed



Fig.05



Fig.04

as in my previous illustrations, but I think it was enough to get the general idea and to start working (Fig.03).

Colour

Regarding the study of light, I started trying colours that I wanted to apply to the character's face and accessories. I don't like to use only one colour applied on a black and white background, so after finding a satisfactory colour I then make a colour palette and add colour variations. With this illustration, I wanted to avoid the thick line used as reference, so I blurred or covered it as I was colouring (Fig.04).

Detail

Many times in the pictures of some great artists, I see a technique that I like a lot. It consists of detailing an area a lot and leaving others

vaguely drawn or with very few details. This helps the viewer to focus on a certain area. This is what I wanted to achieve in this illustration – you can see the Bigfoot's face is much more detailed than the rest, and the areas that are not so interesting have been painted much more quickly, and with broad strokes (Fig.05).

Again, I would like to thank those who voted for me. I hope to be able to go on taking part and learning from the other artists participating. See you!

Ruth Martinez

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1st Rolox

Software Used: Painter & Photoshop

Sketching

After finding out that the character of the month was going to be Bigfoot, I began to forge the idea in my mind. While I fulfilled my work obligations I gave thought to the concept until the idea that I initially considered materialized in Painter. And so a rough sketch emerged (Fig.01), which more or less defined what I had in mind.

Black & White

Having the sketch on screen, I decided to forget about the colours (at least in the beginning), and I started to work all the tones in scale of greys (Fig.02). This helped me to concentrate on the lighting of the scene; the lights and shadows that the character would have. After getting the greys down (Fig.03), I adjusted the tone a little through the brightness and contrast settings.

Adding Colour

I added a layer in Colour mode at this stage to dye the greys, whilst maintaining the levels. With flat colours I painted in the Bigfoot, the books and the lamp (Fig.04). I also gave some brushstroke attention to the background, to add

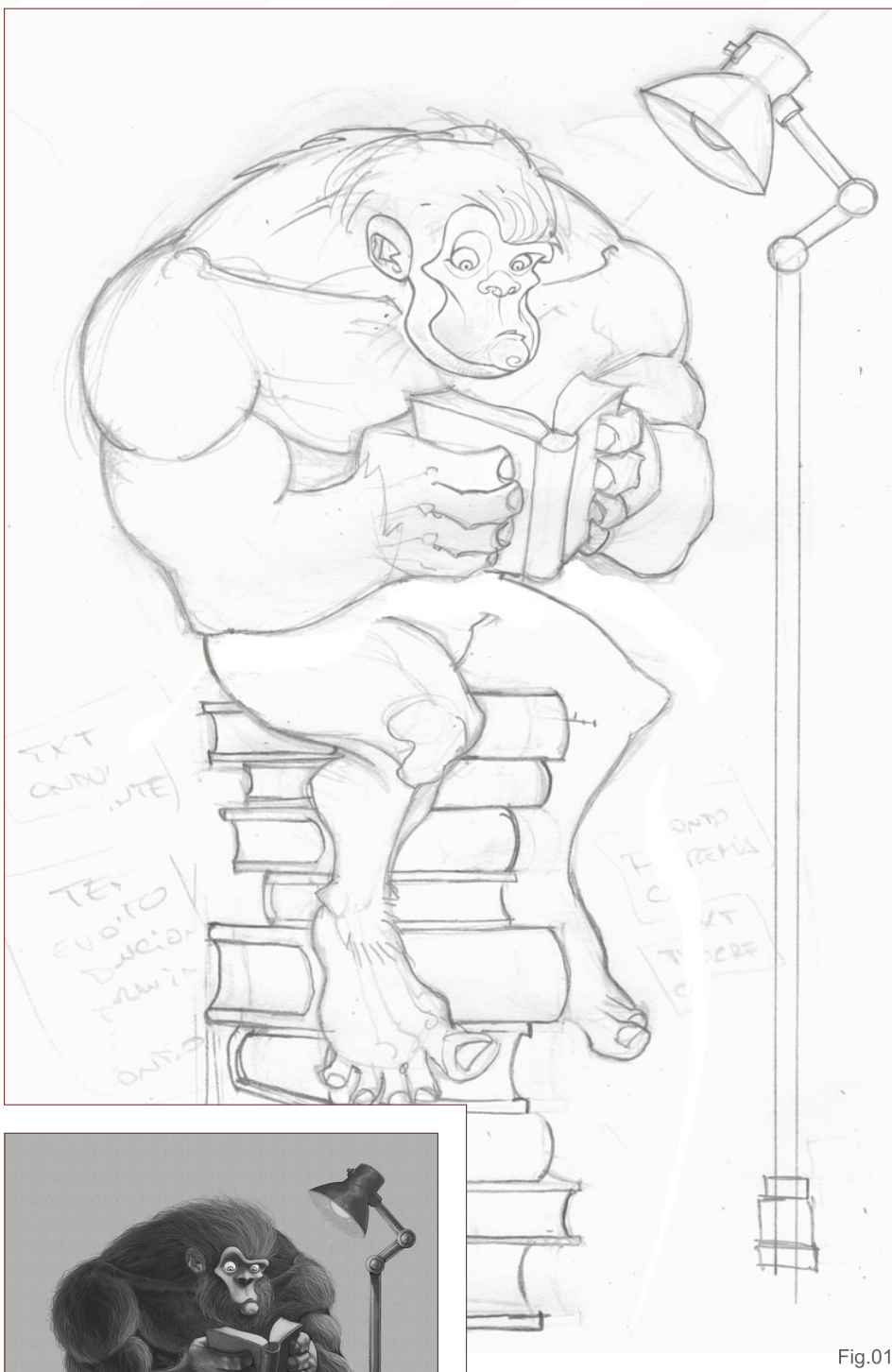


Fig.01



Fig.02

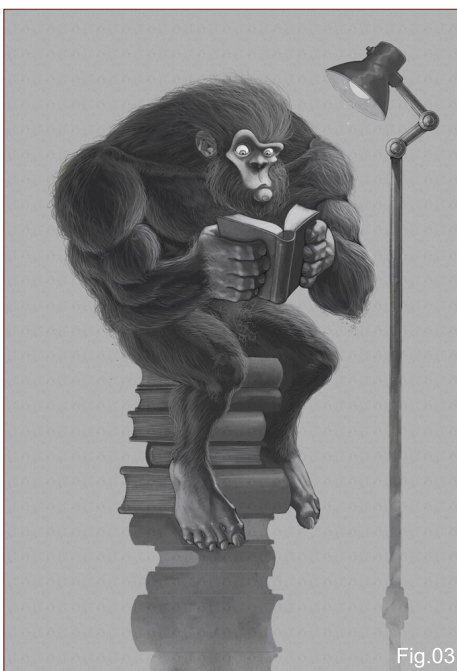


Fig.03

some environment – this was done on a normal layer underneath the character.

Some Changes

After observing the scene for a moment, I decided to modify some small things. I came up with the idea that I should put the character in a natural and wild context, so I removed some of the books and added a large branch of a tree that serves as a support (Fig.05). I also

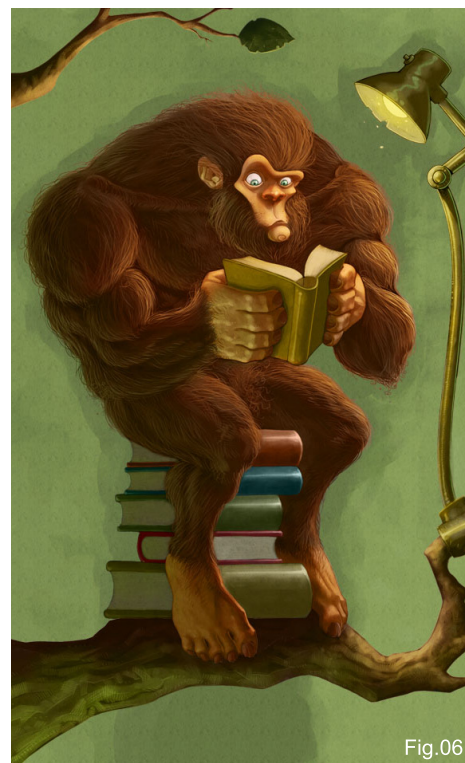
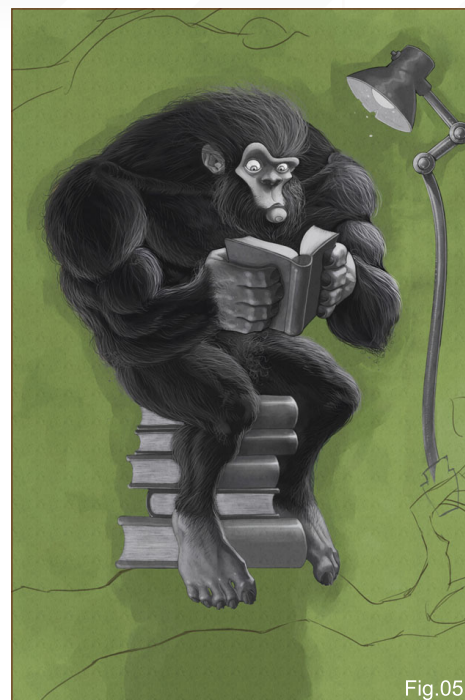
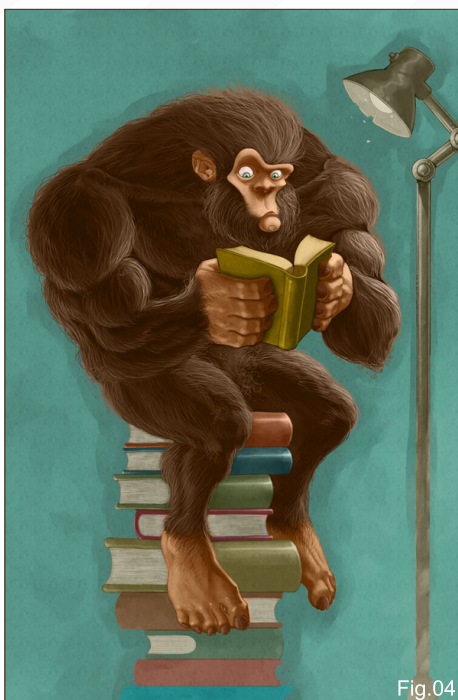
deformed the base of the lamp to adapt it to the tree's branch. These modifications were also done in greyscale, and later painted on a layer in Colour mode.

Enhancing the Colour

From this stage on I added some layers in Overlay mode to enhance tones and to give the scene some warmth (**Fig.06**). Right after this I came up with a new idea that I put into practice immediately: I changed the branch at the top of the image and added a thought bubble on the left-hand side (**Fig.07**), in which to place a representative drawing of man's evolution.

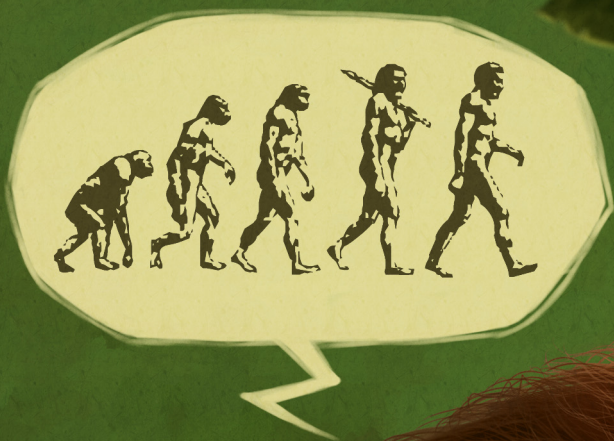
Final Touches

In order to finalise things, I added the name of Charles Darwin on the spine of the book



that Bigfoot is reading, the drawing of man's evolution into the speech bubble, and some sparks of light projecting from the lamp. I finally finished off the illustration by making a light-coloured frame around the image (**Fig.08**).

And that's all for the moment; thanks to all for their support and I hope that you have enjoyed this small article. Bye!



Rolando Mallada

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Fig.08

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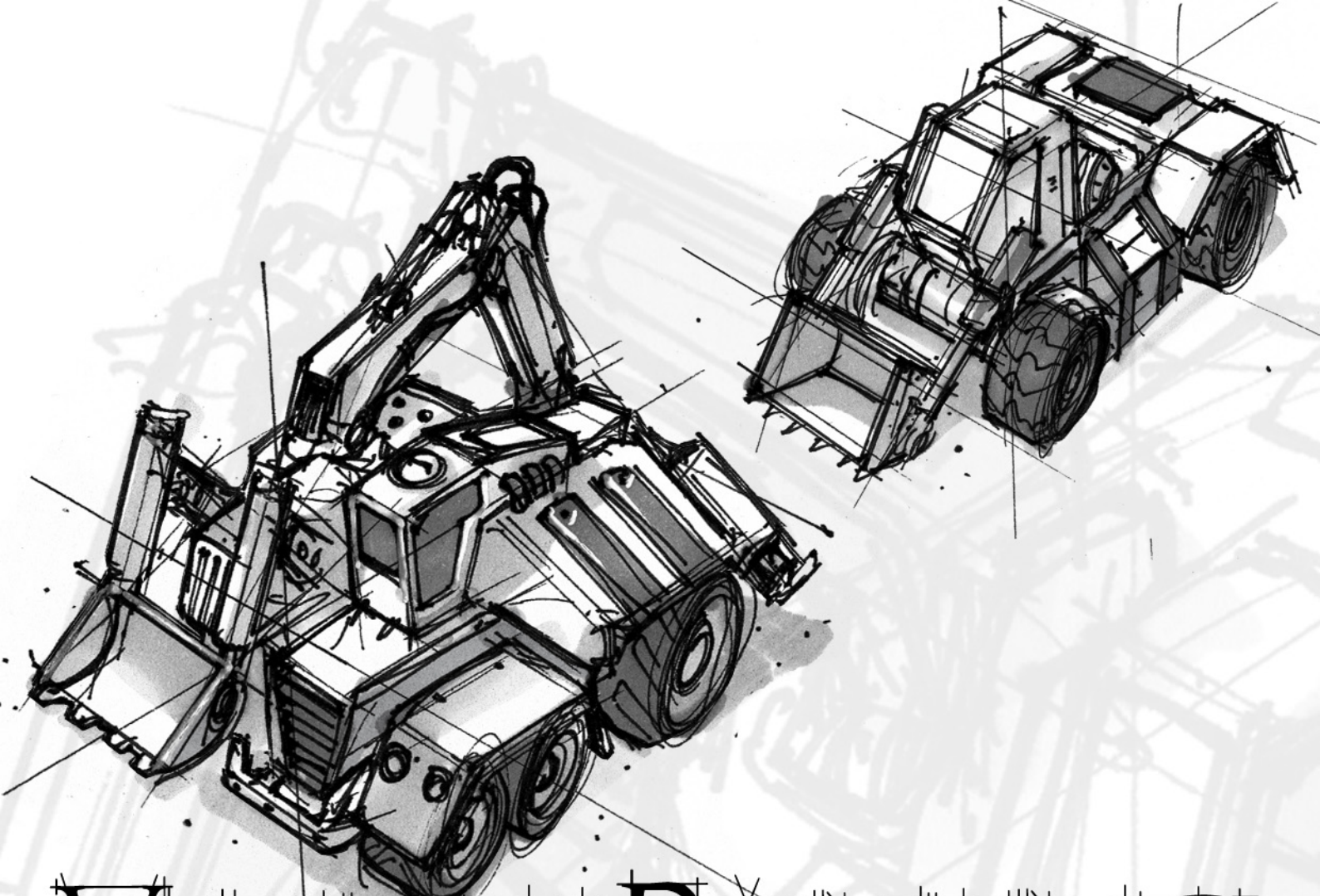
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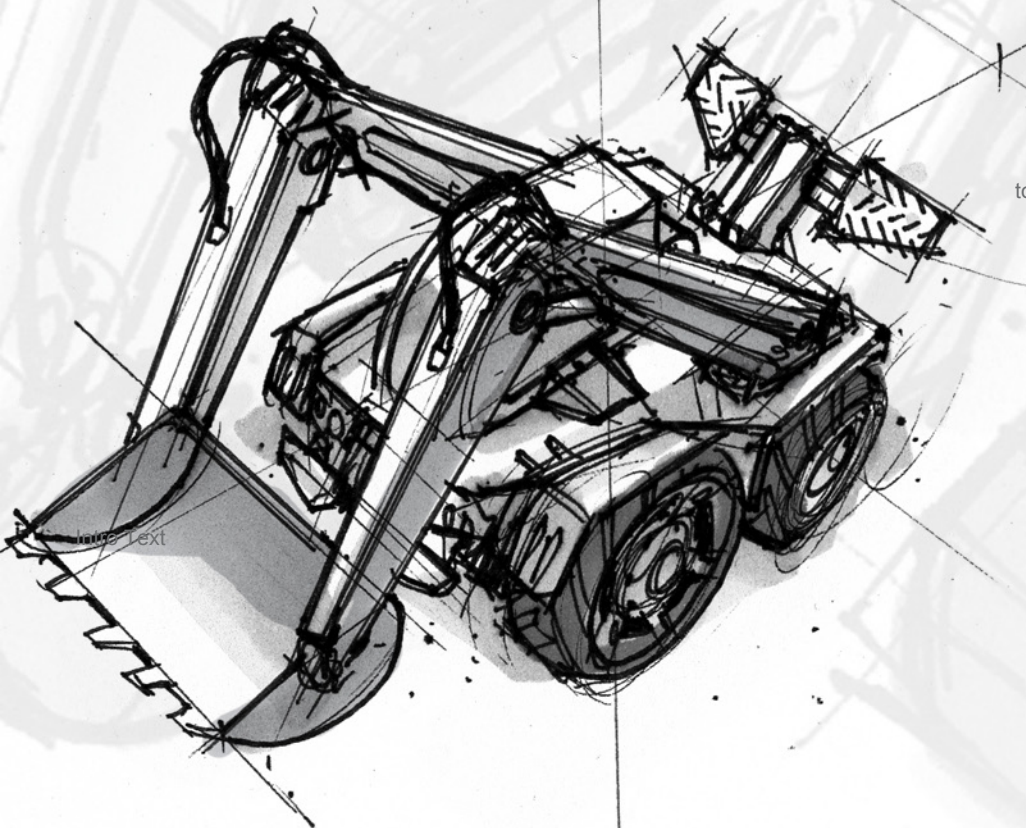


VEHICLE PAINTING

TUTORIAL SERIES

This series will take an in-depth look into the process of designing vehicles, beginning with the concept stage and following through to a final design. We will cover sketching approaches used to evolve and refine an initial idea, and show the techniques used to produce a number of drawings, exploring a variety of designs.

The tutorial will then move onto creating a finished design and placing the vehicle in a simple scene and addressing the issue of rendering the various materials that make up its construction. The importance of perspective will be explained before concluding with a chapter on adding design details and lighting effects.



PART 1 – **Issue 038** Feb 2009

PART 2 – **Issue 039** Mar 2009

PART 3 – **Issue 040** Apr 2009

PART 4 – **Issue 040** May 2009

PART 5 – **Issue 040** Jun 2009

VEHICLE PAINTING

PART 3: RENDERING

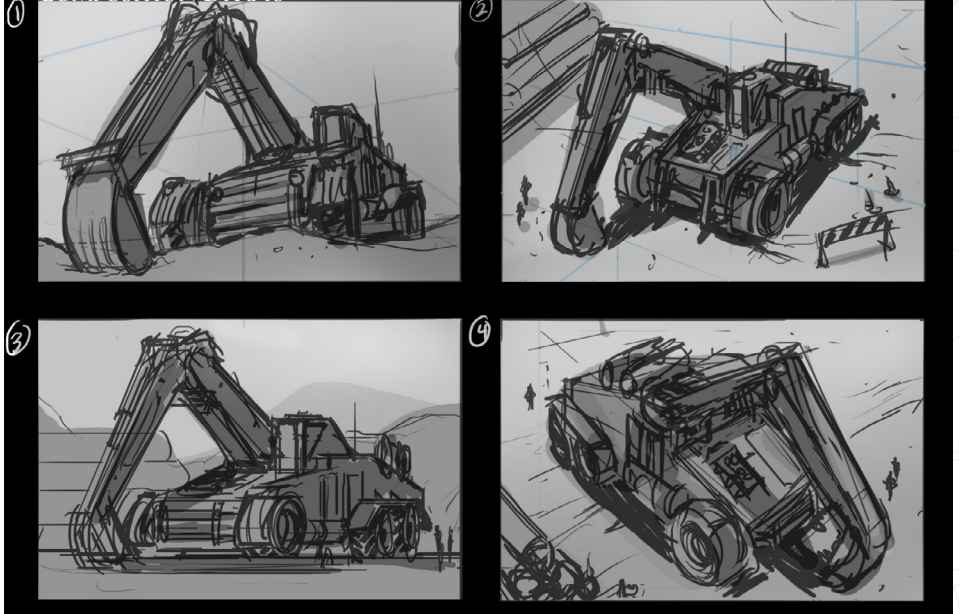
Created In: Photoshop

Introduction

In the third part of the Vehicle Painting tutorial series – my second chapter – I will be refining the concept explored in thumbnails in the first chapter of this series (**February 2009 Issue #038**).

From my thumbnails, I've chosen a design to be developed further into a final presentation piece. Firstly, I quickly draft out four thumbnails of different compositions to see which will be most suitable to present the vehicle (**Fig.01**). The goal of this tutorial is to illustrate a vehicle design, and so I'm not trying to make my concept design look too dynamic or exaggerated in terms of angle and position. What I'm trying to do is to find the best possible angle in order to present the design without experiencing any difficulty or hidden parts.

COMPOSITION DRAFTS



#1 (see **Fig.01**) has a rather dynamic camera angle, which provides an interesting and engaging feel, but at this angle many parts are hidden and overlapped, so it will be difficult for viewers to read parts of the vehicle. This isn't wrong – it's just not the right choice for this illustration.

#2 (see **Fig.01**) is the most comfortable angle to see most of the vehicle. The level of distortion in terms of perspective is lower, so shapes are

more readable. I also like this angle because the vehicle front is facing to the left, and the human eye has been trained to read things from left to right, so it's a nice thing to have your vehicle's front being read first and followed by the rest of it.

#3 (see **Fig.01**) has an average human eye level perspective. It's a better choice than **#1**, but not as good as **#2**. At this angle, many details on the top part of the vehicle are hidden.

#4 (see **Fig.01**) is another angle – similar to **#2** but at the other side of the vehicle this time. Although the angle is right, because of the huge arm on the vehicle, a big part of the vehicle is blocked by it, so it's not such a good idea to go with this one either.

Line Art Drafting

After a process of elimination, I've decided to go for composition **#2**. I usually work with 3D software these days to construct a rough proxy shape of my vehicles, simply because it saves a lot more time and is a lot more accurate, but in this tutorial I would like to share with you guys how I work with a design starting from a line art, all the way to the final render. I'm going to be working entirely in Photoshop from here on.

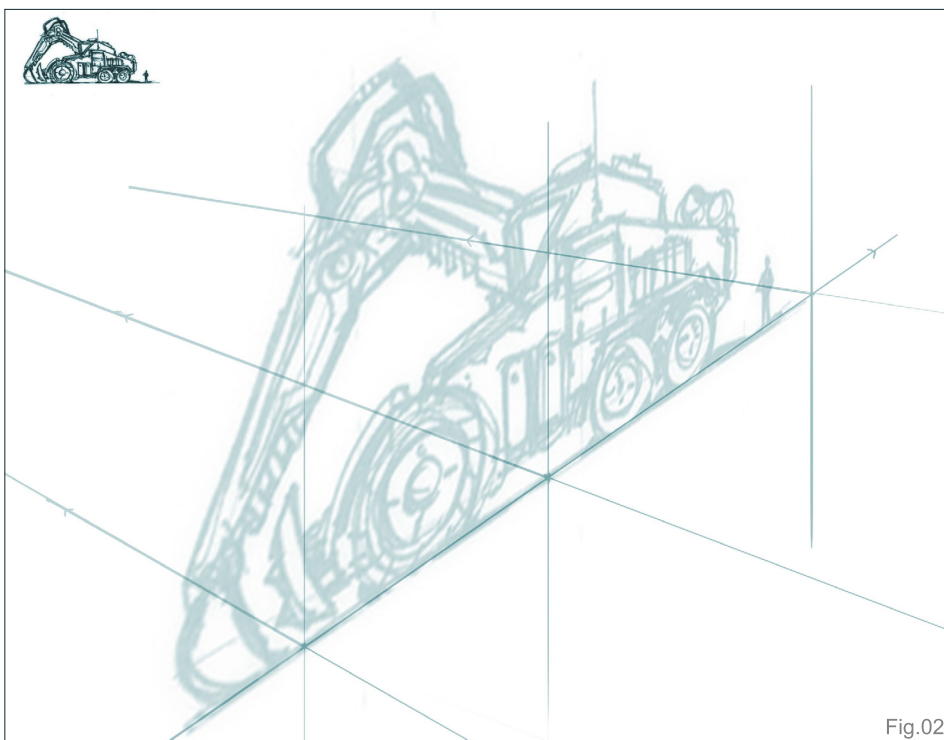


Fig.02

Firstly, referring to the composition draft selected (#2) I lay down some perspective guidelines. They are not 100% accurate, but should be good enough. I then take the thumbnail done for the first chapter of the series, and distort it according to the perspective guides, making it look like a flat image in the centre of the space. This can then be used as a design guide (**Fig.02**). From there I start blocking in primitive shapes that create the foundation for the vehicle (**Fig.03**). I always work from general to specific because it's much easier for me to judge an overall shape before committing too much time to one particular part if the rest is not working.

Once I'm happy with the basic shape of the vehicle, I remove the guidelines and start to refine the shapes with more sub shapes and details (**Fig.04 & Fig.05**). This part is really fun because with details you can determine the character of a certain shape, and at times even provide more context for the subject. For detailing mechanical designs, I always follow this rule: balance. What do I mean by that? Well, I would always try to create parts with intricate designs and parts that are huge and

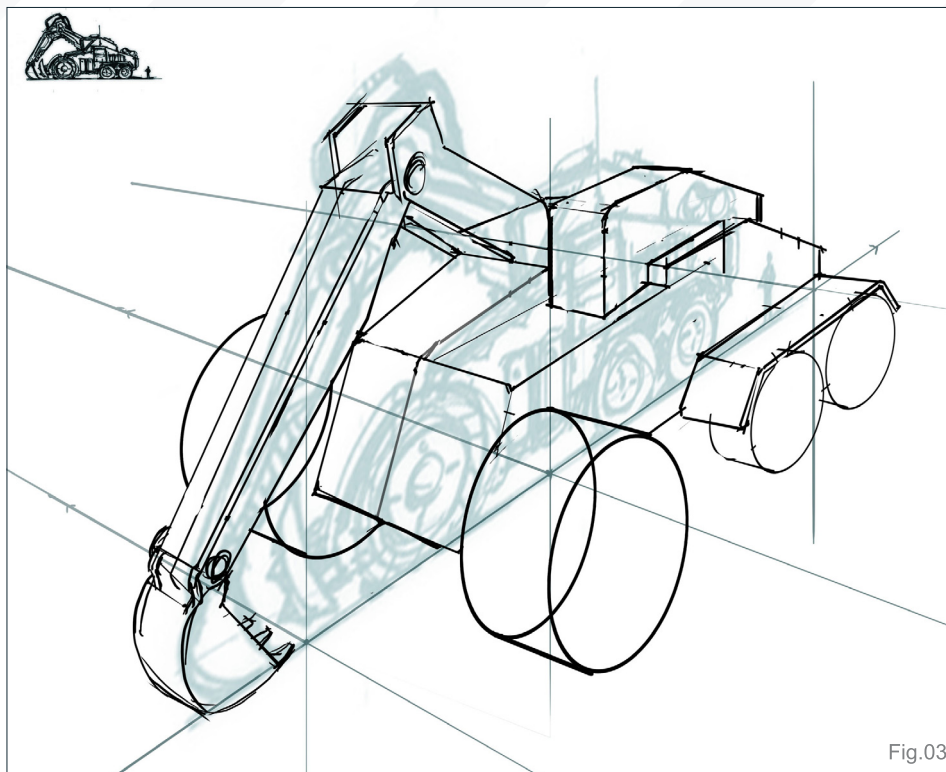


Fig.03

plain so that, in the end, there's a balance between the two. I will never do one more than the other unless there's a need to, but usually I would have big shapes work with much smaller shapes to create some contrast. Detailing requires a lot of referencing, especially mechanical designs because parts and pieces

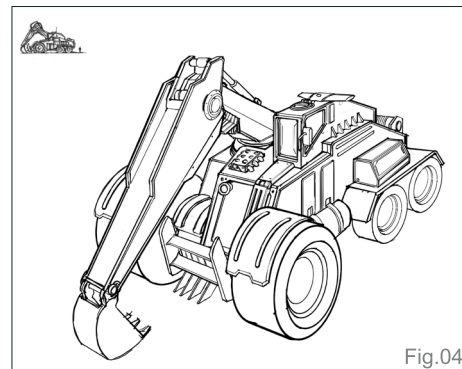


Fig.04

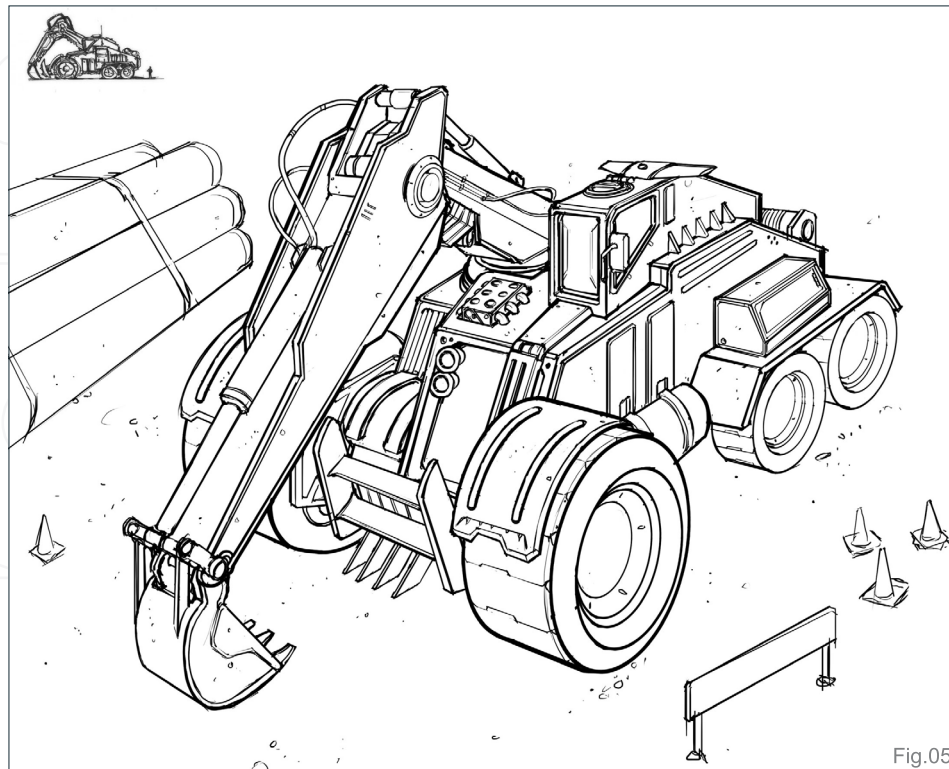


Fig.05

have to look believable in terms of function and logic. Details are not just filling up a space with unnecessary shapes; they have to mean something. For example, this area of detail must have something that looks like part of the engine, or this part should have details that suggest a power source. If one accomplishes that, it will make a design much more believable and realistic and not just a mesh of junk.

Once I'm happy with the line art, I can start setting up the light source. Here I use natural light and cast it from the left of the image (**Fig.06**). I made the cockpit area brightest because I want to direct viewers to that area instantly, and with natural light I can have shadows with no distortion. Artificial lights are

usually close to the subject and therefore create long, distorted shadows which are too dramatic for this piece. Light is the other element that plays a very important role in making a design more believable, because things like cast shadows will help ground the shapes into the space. When one picture looks like it's floating, usually it has something to do with the light and shadow being inaccurate. Also: don't forget the contrast of light and shadow. Shapes nearer to the camera should have higher contrast compared to shapes further behind, unless you're trying to achieve otherwise.

So here I block in all the local colours of each part, with lighting and shadows cast (**Fig.07**). If there's any weathering or damage to the material I would usually do that towards the end of the piece – again, working from general to specific. Right now I'm just trying to get my light and colours as accurate as possible (**Fig.08**).

I've been laying down the colours and light on a Multiply layer over the line art; I will also do an overall colour adjustment to the piece to make it look less saturated. Once this is done, I will create a new 100% opacity layer on top of

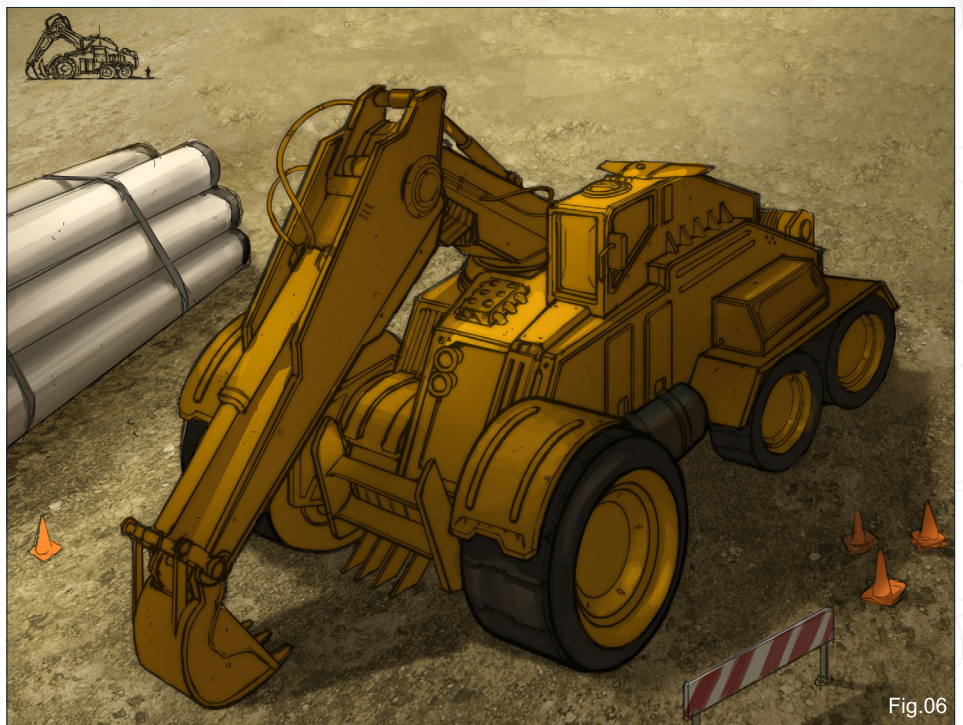


Fig.06

everything and start painting in the finer details and further enhancements of the light and shapes.

Material Rendering

Here are the two materials that I'm using for the vehicle (**Fig.09**). The first one is a chrome metal, used on hydraulics. Being hydraulics,

the surface needs to be smooth, and thus a polished chrome metal, not a brushed one, would be the best choice. The smooth, polished surface of chrome is highly reflective and it could almost reflect everything around it like a mirror. As where the reflection of the sky makes the ocean blue, the same goes for metal. It reflects whatever colour or material is around it, so it's really like rendering the reflected colours more than rendering a specific colour for the metal. This metal also has very high specular/hotspot, so the tonal changes are more obvious – like having a really dark line right next to the brightest part of the metal. This contrast will instantly create a very polished, smooth surface, as opposed to a soft blend of tonal values like the yellow material.

The yellow material I made is a painted metal sort of material. It is yellow gloss paint over brushed metal. Even though it still has traits of a metal, the elements have been softened because of a layer of glossy paint. The reflection and specular is much lower in contrast, but not in value. The hotspot could still get very bright, but it would not be next to the darkest area because the paint has softened the tonal values of the metal.

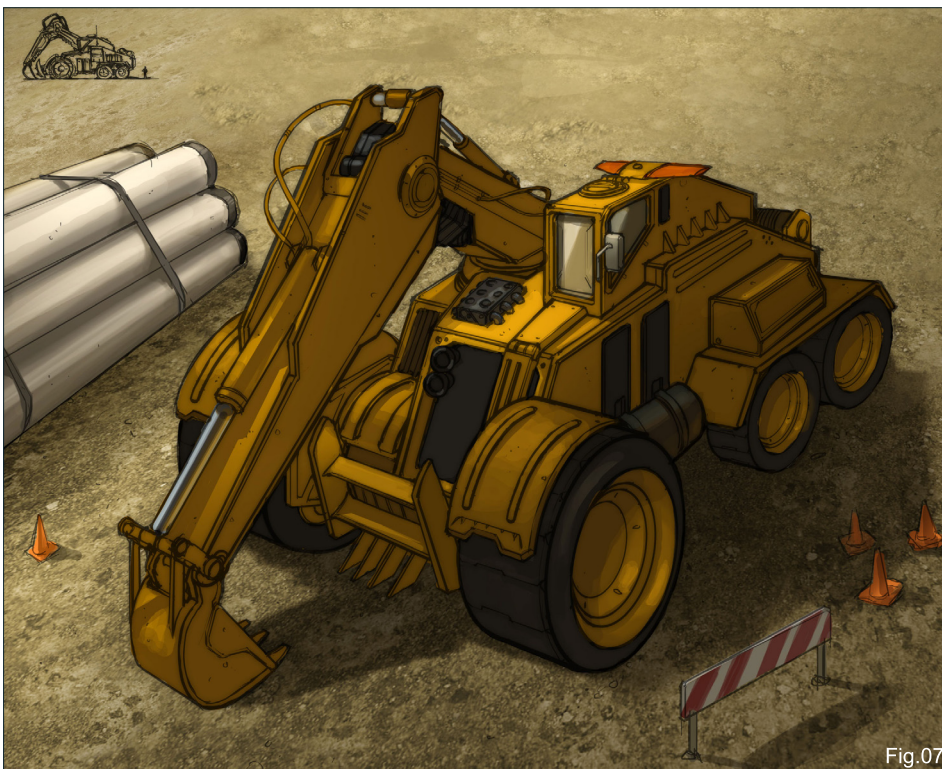


Fig.07

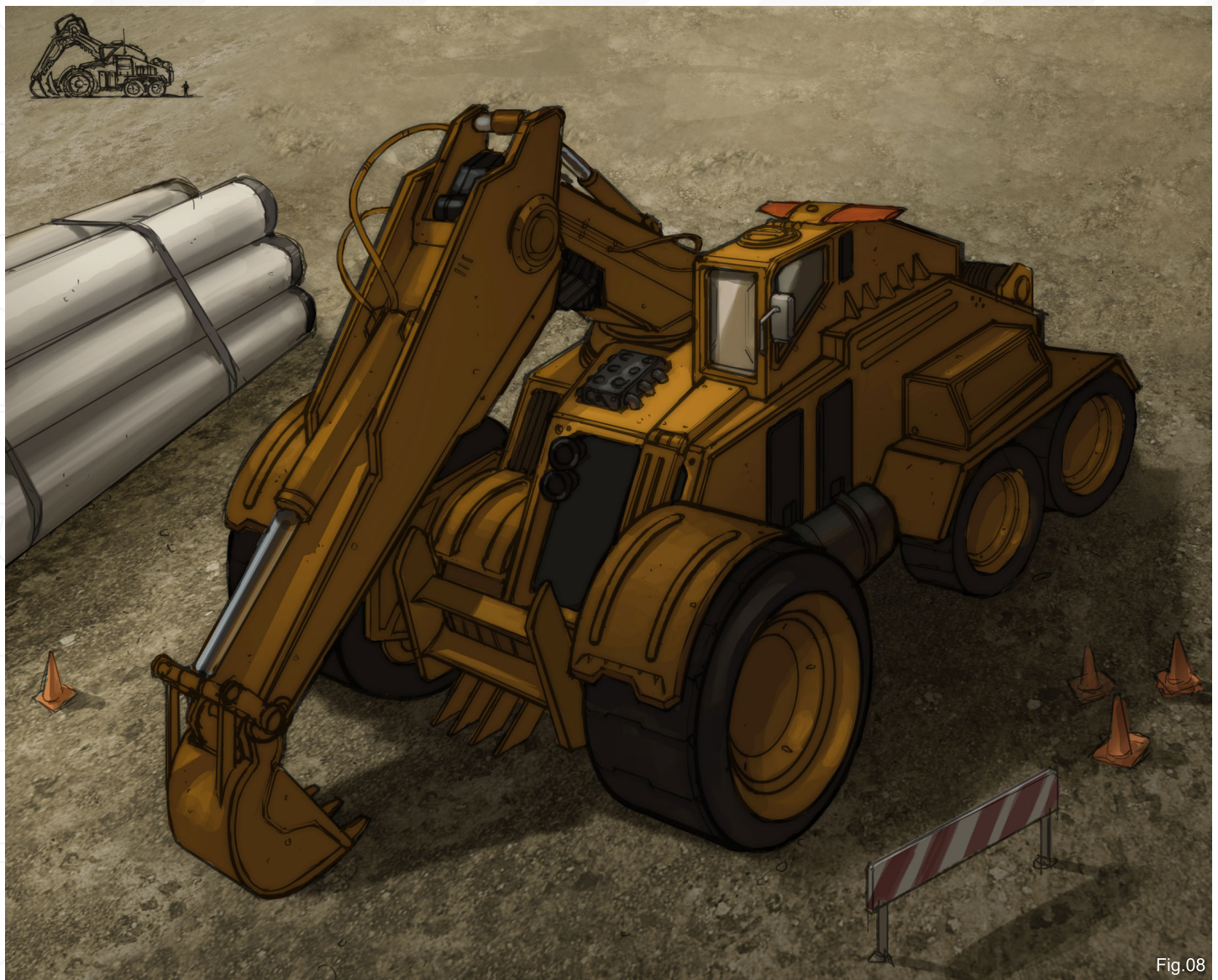


Fig.08

The diagram on the right of **Fig.09** shows the grains of the two different metals. The first one is the polished metal which has finer grains, and thus provides a more stable surface for light to reflect in a parallel order, which eventually creates a sharper reflection. Whereas, the brushed metal has rougher grains, so light is reflecting at different angles, and thus creating a softer blend of reflections and tonal values.

I hope you have enjoyed my second instalment – the third chapter of this series. Dwayne will be back next month with his third (and final) instalment, and I will be back in the June issue with the final chapter of the series. Thanks for reading!

THAM HOI MUN

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MATERIAL RENDERING

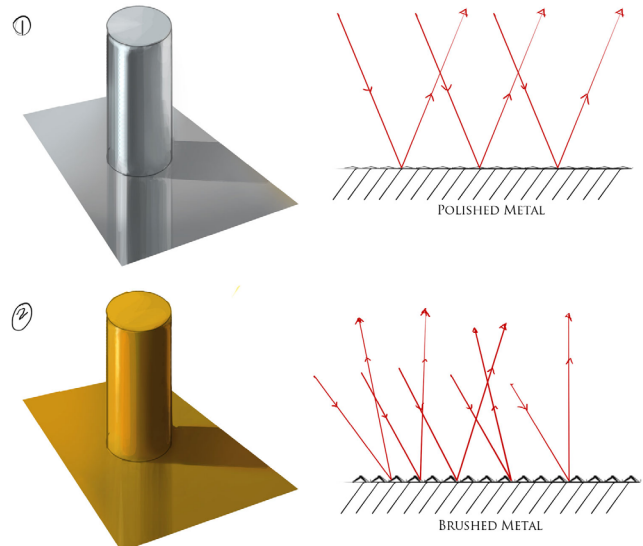


Fig.09

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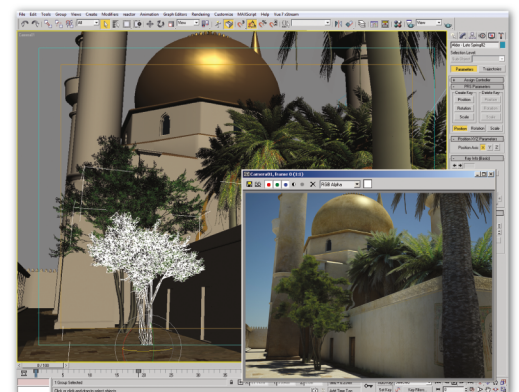
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SPEED PAINTING

Welcome to the Speed Painting section of the magazine. This month we've asked two artists to produce a speed painting based on a simple, one-line brief. Here we feature the final paintings and the overview of the creation processes.

This month our talented artists, [Ehsan Dabbaghi](#) and [Emrah Elmasli](#), tackle the topic:

*As night fell
the darkness came alive*

Ehsan Dabbaghi

Created In:

Adobe Photoshop

Concept

With this kind of task, first of all we must think about what we want to paint. I personally thought about the topic for a couple of days and then got my thoughts down visually by painting three sketches in black and white. From those sketches, I could work out exactly what I wanted to achieve with my painting: to depict a story about a group who want to stay in a camp all night long, but where no one knows what will happen once the sun goes down and darkness reigns.

Step 1

So, with the story in place, I can now get to work. I start by making a new blank canvas in

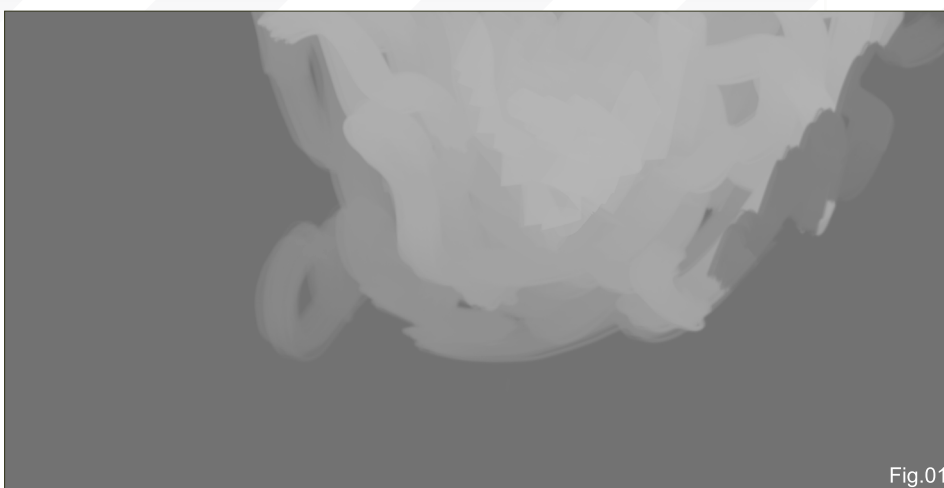
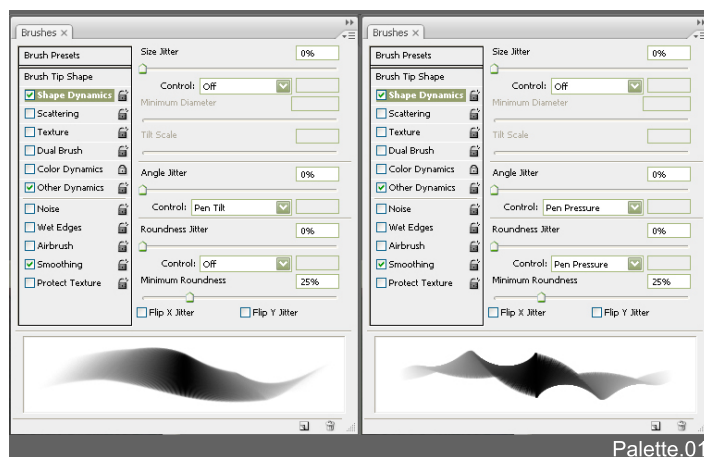


Fig.01



Brush.01



Palette.01

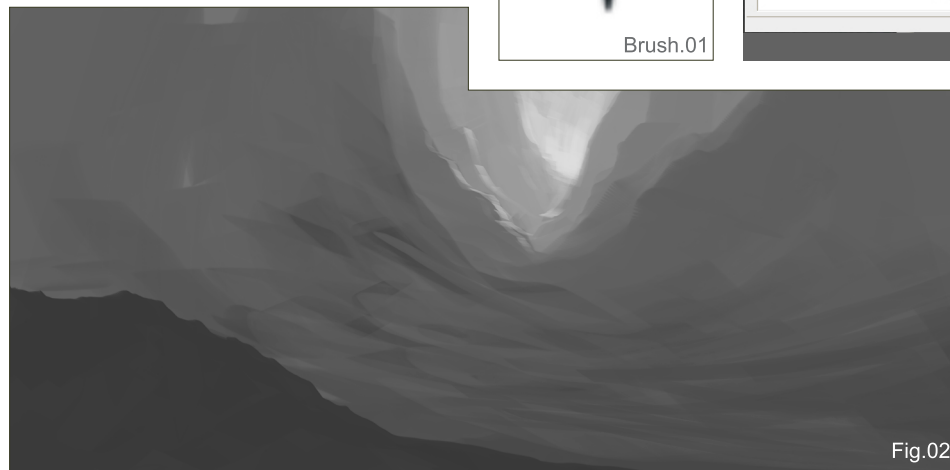


Fig.02

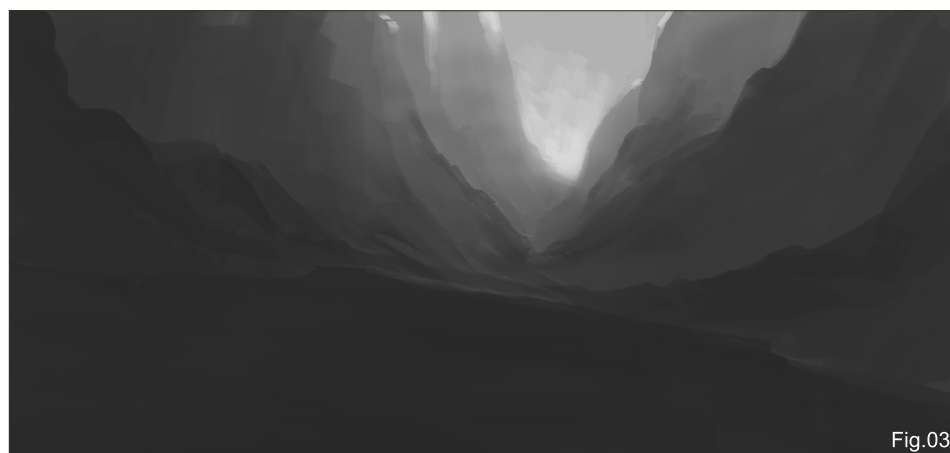


Fig.03

Photoshop at 4000 x 2000 pixels. I use some shaped brushes and just play around with the black and white paint, getting a feel for shape and tone (**Fig.01**). I think it's important to always try to work at about 50% or 25% zoom at this stage; that way you can see the whole image easily and think about the composition whilst you're working on it.

Step 2

Okay, this is where I have to refine the design, so I make a brush that will be useful for this task (**Brush.01**). You can see the options selected for this brush in the palette (**Palette.01**); in Other Dynamics I set both options to Pen Pressure. These brushes can give very interesting random lines and shapes that I personally find are really great to work, especially when you select an area with the Lasso tool and then paint.

At this stage I add a foreground to the painting, as you can see (**Fig.02**). I believe that light is



Fig.04

the most important thing to keep in mind when painting. I heard somewhere that you shouldn't think about light at first; that you should use colour to get the light established very slowly, and then with just one or two touches of your brush you can achieve the light. Well, I'm not sure whether that's right or not, but it certainly sounds like a nice concept! I will test the theory out in my next painting. Getting back to work, I now add some light grey where I want my light source to be coming from.

Step 3

I wanted to make a connection between the foreground and background in that previous

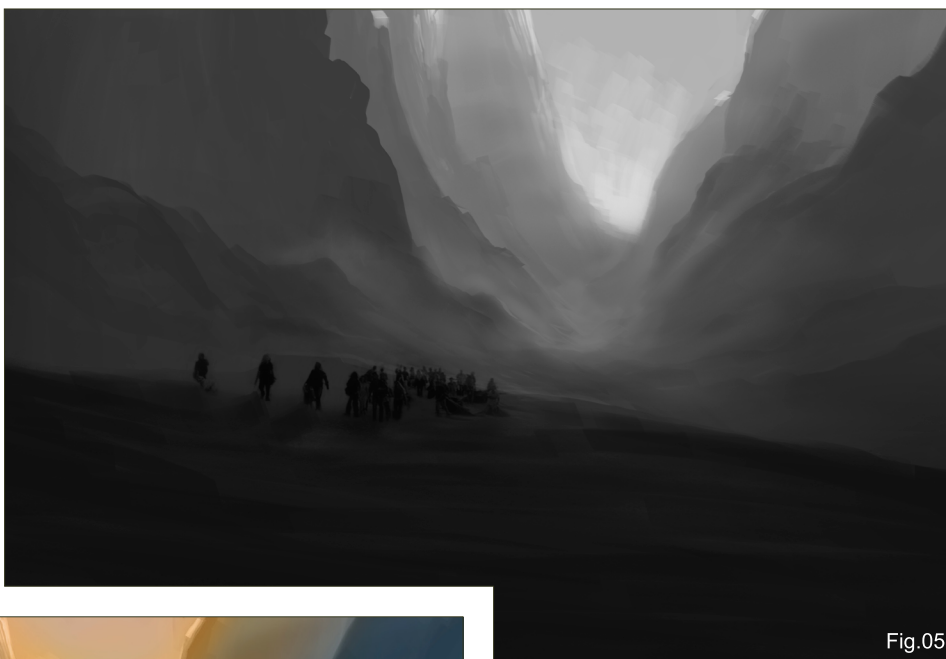


Fig.05

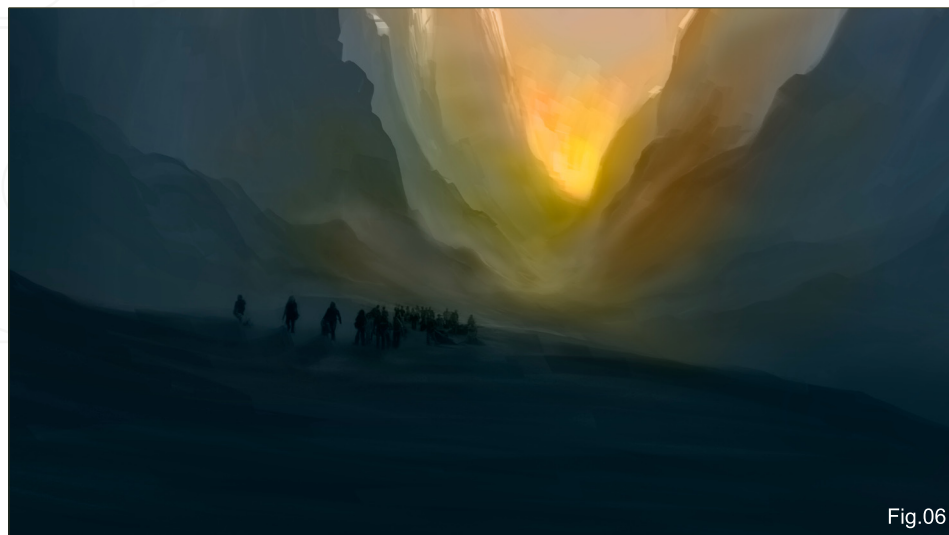


Fig.06

stage, and I have achieved what I want: a feeling of depth. The light in the mountains seems to be working, and so now I need to start thinking about the shapes of the rocks as they will form a very important part of the scene (Fig.03).

Step 4

Here I add in the poor guys who are going to be facing the darkness of the night in this scene, and possibly also dealing with the fear of their own deaths (Fig.04).

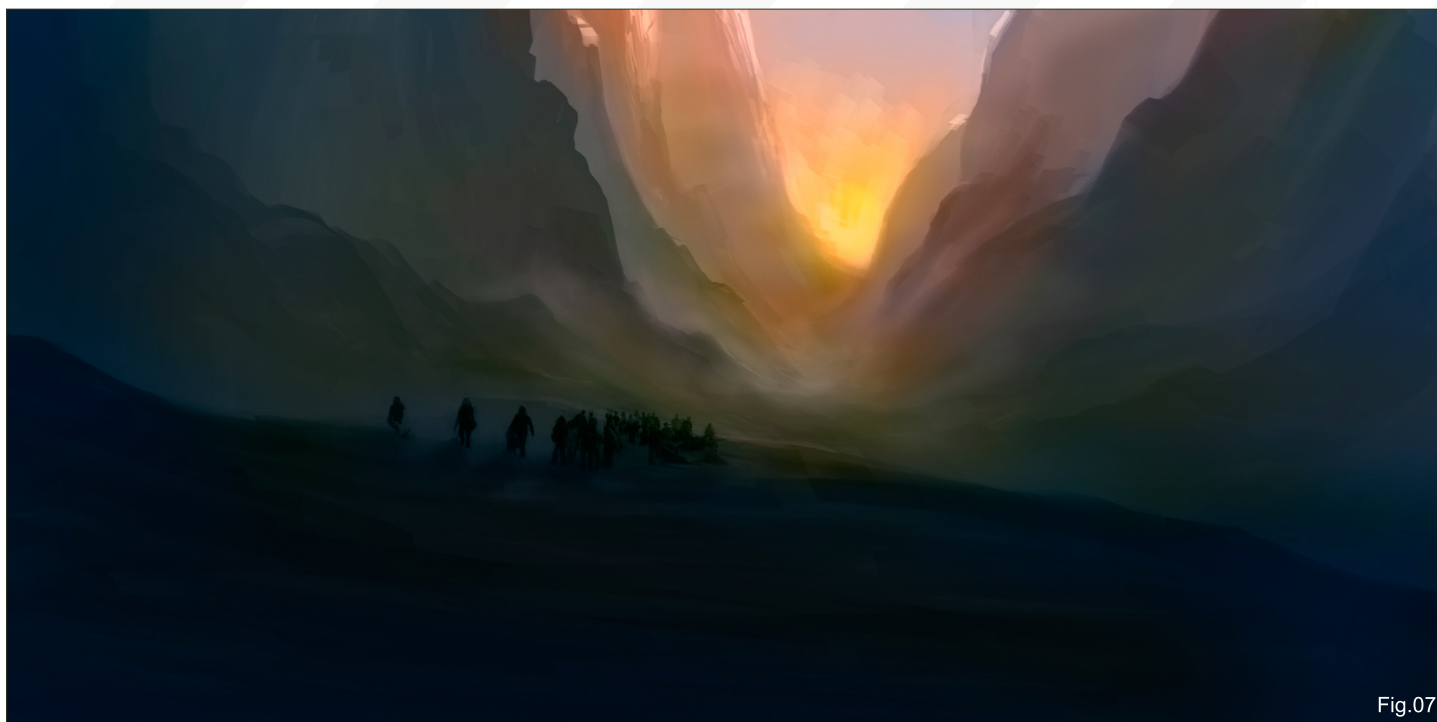


Fig.07

Step 5

I use an airbrush at this point to add some haze to the background and to help achieve a better feeling of depth. I also make the foreground darker – which isn't too important at this stage as you can always do this towards the end of the painting (Fig.05).

Step 6

At last, I finally reach the colour stage! I start by creating a new layer in Colour mode. I like

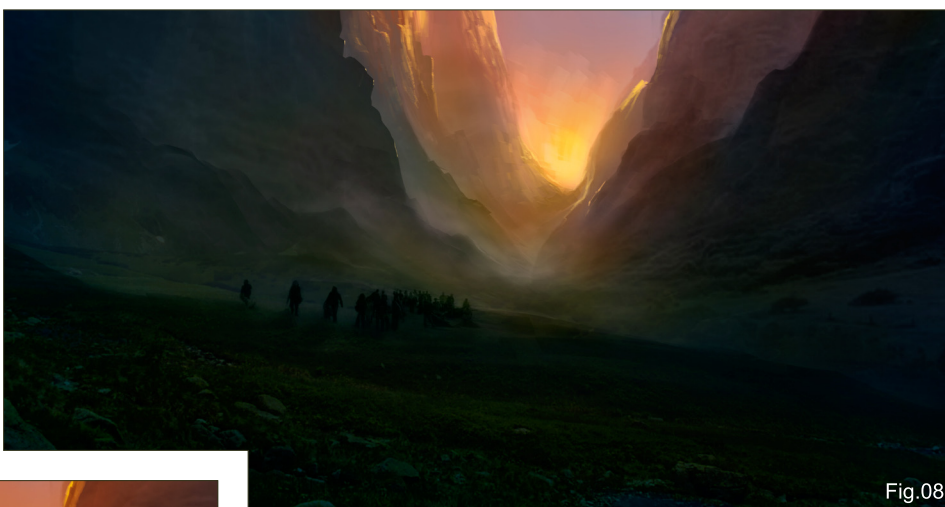


Fig.08



Fig.09

the contrast between orange and blue, and so this is the colour scheme I choose for the base work of this particular scene. It also works well with the story of the sundown (Fig.06).

Step 7

I create a Colour Balance layer here and add some blue to the shadows. I also add more red and yellow to the highlights (Fig.07).

Step 8

Now it's time to add textures. Using the colour of textures can prove useful; they can work very well when you get into thinking about colour in your painting. For the textures in this piece I use a Soft Light layer, from the layer palette mode. I have three texture layers in total; you can use textures to distort or even to add more perspective to your painting. I use this trick on the mountains (Fig.08).

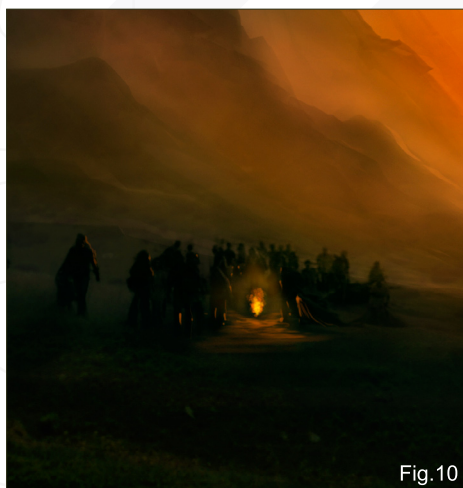


Fig.10

Step 9

I use an Overlay layer here, which is great for creating nice colour effects – kind of like a glaze does with oil paint. Here I further detail the mountain area (**Fig.09**).

Step 10

Here I continue to add story and mood to the scene by creating a fire in the centre of the huddled guys in the middle ground, and painting the reflection from the fire onto the men. All of this helps to focus the viewer's attention on the people on the scene and assists with the story of the camp at dusk (**Fig.10**).

Step 11

Adding some light to the foreground and middle ground area here is a good move – it further helps with the connection between the foreground and background, as mentioned before (**Fig.11**).



Fig.11

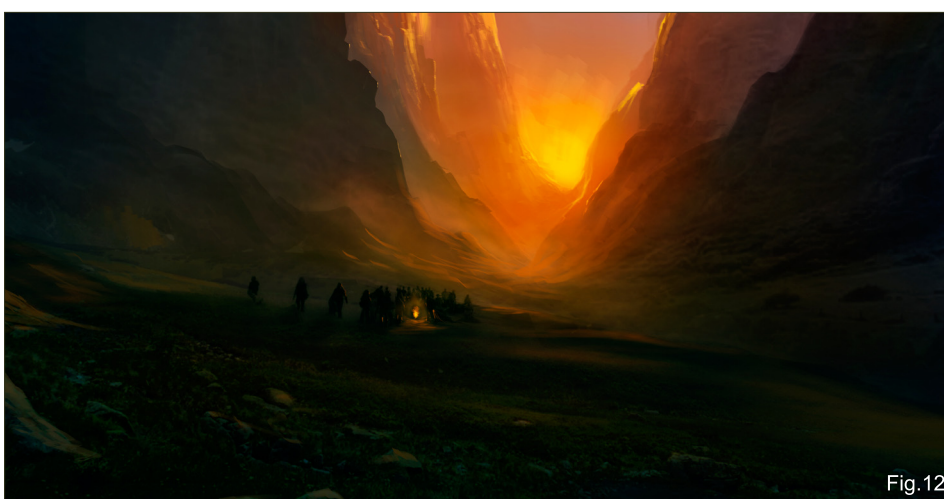


Fig.12

Step 12

This stage is all about helping to define the rocks and shapes, with some detailing brush work (**Fig.12**).

Step 13

Using a Colour layer is a really important trick to bring in at the end of a painting; you can create

the colour directly on the image – which is pretty exciting! I've never worked with oil paints before, but I do know a little about it, and I think that if a digital painter can have an understanding of traditional oil and acrylic painting then it can help them to create a better digital painting. Understanding colour is important, as is the affect of applying a glaze to a finished painting – which is what I'm currently trying to develop an understanding of. With my Colour layer here, I try to imitate the affect that a glaze might (I assume) create on a traditional painting of a similar subject (**Fig.13**).

Step 14

Back lighting. I like it when there is light behind your camera; it seems to give more feeling to an image. To do this, I create a new layer in normal mode and just paint with the colour I want. Take a look at the mountain in the background (**Fig.14**); it's important to use colours for shapes.



Fig.13

I'm very happy with the red that seems to look good in there, beside the shadow colour – I really like this part of the image.

To finish up, I select all of the layers, drag and drop them into a new layer (using the function at the bottom of the layer palette to create the new layer), and then press Ctrl + E. I go to Sharpen > Unsharp Mask and set the options as required to make a nicely sharp image. To achieve more depth on your scene it can also be a good idea to erase some areas, if needs be. This also helps to create more of a feeling of focus.

As a final note, be sure to enjoy painting and be happy with your final outcome. Thanks for reading!

Ehsan Dabbaghi

For more from this artist visit:

<http://ehsand.cgsociety.org/gallery/>

Or contact:

artistofpersia@yahoo.com

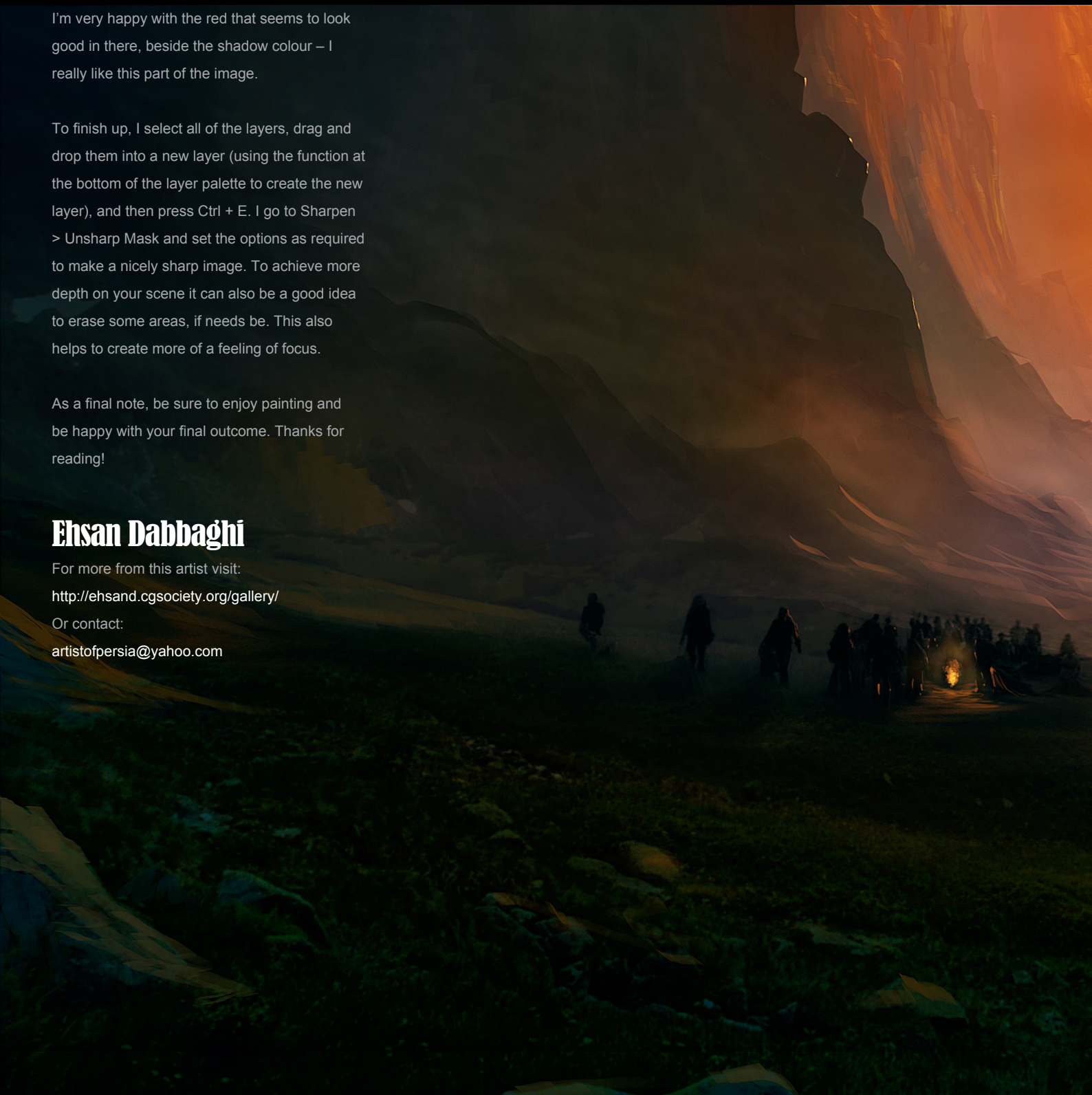




Fig.14

Emrah Elmasli

Created In:

Photoshop & Painter

Hi 2DArtist readers! Once again, I'm back with a new tutorial. 2008 is now in the past and I feel that 2009 is going to be a really exciting year. Hopefully I'll be doing more speed paintings for you all; I've got more coming up after this month, so don't miss out!

This month's subject was quite challenging actually. It was hard to come up with a decent concept. But then I thought that it would be a good idea to paint a simple, yet effective scene. I used a strong yellow backlight for the main light source and a very pale blue for the secondary foreground lighting. It's really surprising to see how a strong backlight can instantly create an effective mood. You don't even have to render the figures because the silhouettes pretty much do the job. Okay, enough talking, let's get started!



Fig.01

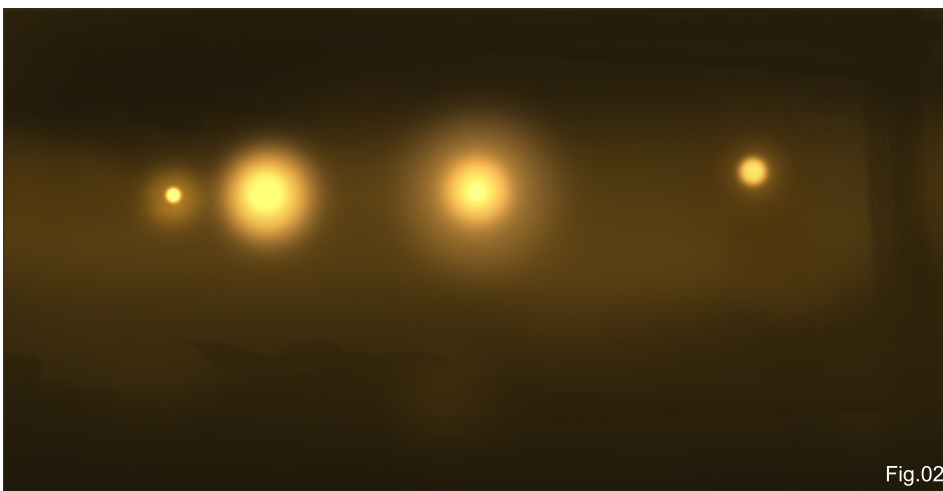


Fig.02



Fig.03

Step 1

I start by firing up Photoshop CS3 and opening a new vertical page of 2200x1200 pixels at 150 ppi. This is pretty much enough for a quickie. Now, I select a main colour and fill in the canvas. I'm using a brownish colour (dark scenes don't have to be blue!). I then choose a soft round brush and glaze the horizon with a lighter tone of the colour. This helps me to get a feel for the environment a little better (Fig.01).

Step 2

It's time to brighten up the scene a bit now, so I add four lampposts to achieve this, which will be all blurred from the mist. Then I create a new layer and change the layer options to Overlay. I paint the first pass with a soft brush, using yellow. I then create a new layer and select Colour Overlay from the options. I do the same thing again but this time using a more saturated yellow. This gives me four really bright lights now, which are going to be my main light source (Fig.02).

Step 3

Okay, time bring some life into the scene. I paint in a couple of trees – maybe we're in a creepy park or something? I don't know yet. Maybe there's a small path between the trees, curling and disappearing towards the horizon – that would look nice (hold on, I sounded like Bob Ross then!). You can create custom brushes to paint trees even faster, if you want. I painted



Fig.04



Fig.05

these from scratch, though – it really doesn't take that long (Fig.03).

Step 4

As the next step, I start to add some detail. I also add the pale blue light coming from the foreground, which helps to add some depth

to the scene. I decide to overlay a texture layer on the top to make it look even moodier. I basically select a textured brush, increase the master diameter and paint with it directly. I then decrease the opacity of the Overlay layer (Fig.04).

Step 5

Now it's time to put the characters in. I paint in a running female figure coming towards the camera. She's softly backlit by the lampposts. I also paint in some weird creatures with red eyes. They are figuratively the "darkness", or the "creatures of the dark". They are also backlit – well, yeah, she's escaping from them after all (Fig.05)!

Step 6

This is the "glazing" step where I create a few overlay layers and brighten up the scene with



Fig.06

a couple of brushstrokes. It's important not to exaggerate this step, though, otherwise the highlights end up being overwhelming (Fig.06).

Final

Finally, and for a change, I take this painting into Painter, where I throw in a couple of brushstrokes using the palette knife (which is my favourite tool in Painter). This part isn't essential; it's just an extra step I chose to do to make the picture look more "painterly". And I think it worked – done (Fig.07)!

I hope you've enjoyed this latest speed painting. Thanks for reading!

Emrah Elmasli

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Fig.07



SPACE PAINTING

I - PLANETS AND STAR FIELDS

PART 1: STARS + NEBULAS - JULY 2008

PART 2: BARREN WORLDS - AUGUST 2008

PART 3: BARREN PLANETS - SEPTEMBER 2008

PART 4: GAIAN PLANETS - OCTOBER 2008

PART 5: COLONISED PLANETS - NOVEMBER 2008

II - TRANSPORT

PART 6: SPACESHIPS - DECEMBER 2008

PART 7: CAPITAL SHIPS - JANUARY 2009

PART 8: SPACE STATIONS - FEBRUARY 2009

III - ENVIRONMENTS

PART 9: SCI-FI HANGAR - MARCH 2009

PART 10: SPACE BATTLE - APRIL 2009

PART 11: MINING THE ASTEROID FIELDS - MAY 2009

PART 12: SPACE COLONIES - JUNE 2009

SPACE PAINTING

ENVIRONMENTS: PART 10: SPACE BATTLE

Created In: Photoshop

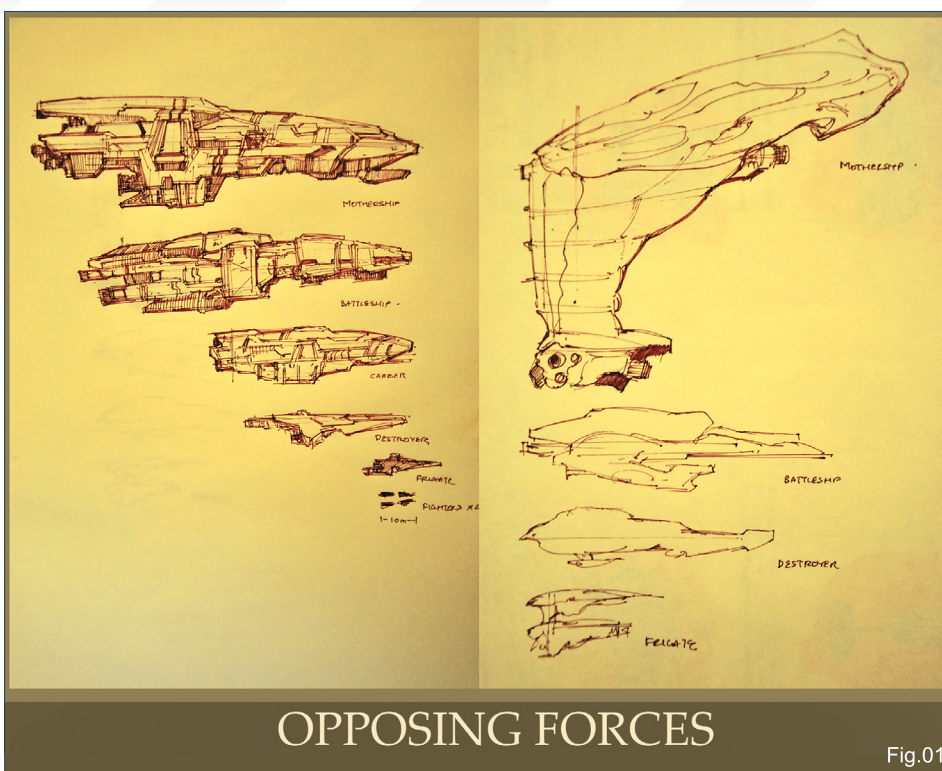
Overview

In part ten of this space series, I would like to share how a typical freelance artist, or studio, may go about producing key scenes for use within the pre-production process of a game or movie. Cue a space battle as a chance to create some creative mayhem and exciting visuals.

Throughout the series, we have focused on the more practical aspects of design, generating ideas and troubleshooting your way through a brief, visually. In contrast, we will now focus more on the production side of art; producing concepts, iterations and visuals that can be used to create assets for use within a matte painting, virtual 3D set or game environment.

I: Assembling the Props

Throughout this series we have worked on a



OPPOSING FORCES

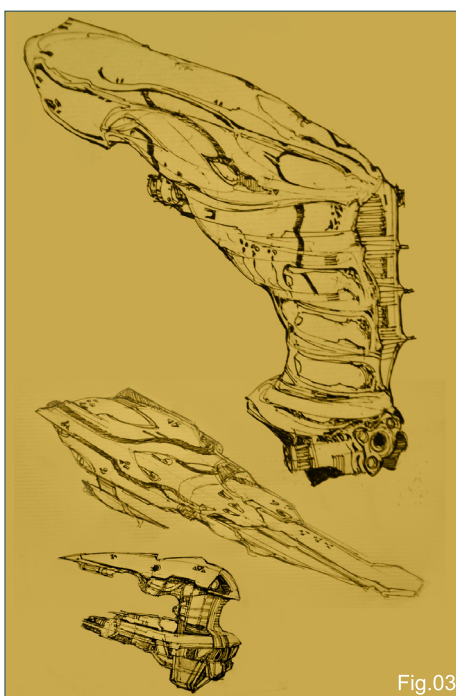
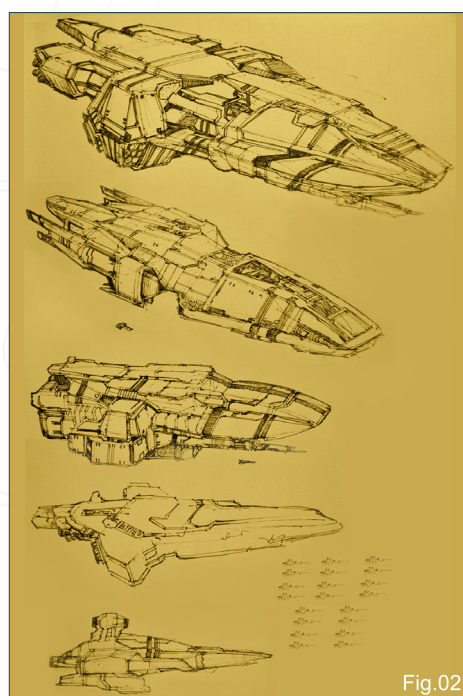
variety of fighters, capital ships, stations and shapes. Now is the opportunity to be selective and bring them all back in within a compositional context. And just to keep things rich and original, let's have an opposing force that looks and feels more organic and alien-like in its design language and aesthetic (Fig.01). For this scene, our main purpose is to produce a set of key moments in an epic space fleet battle, followed

by producing a composite shot to show how a singular key battle moment may be illustrated as the "money shot".

Opposing Forces – Line Up

A good starting point would be to line up the various capital ship and ship profiles side by side, so that you can visualize the core silhouettes of both forces (see Fig.01). On the far left, Team Alpha is defined by a symmetrical, semi-industrialised, angular look that is characterised by chunky and elongated forms along the longitudinal axis. In contrast, the far right Team Zeta is defined by a more organic geometric shape, coupled with elements of an asymmetrical nature that borrow from shapes such as a trident, scythe, and a two-to-three pronged fork.

The next step is to extrapolate these ship profiles into something more volumetric. Personally, it seems easiest to extrapolate to a three-quarter perspective view of either the front- or rear-side angle (Fig.02 & Fig.03). In addition, it's also useful to block these designs out into a black and white silhouette to check them for readability.



One thing that may be surprising is that after adding details and panelling, the overall forms do not work out as well as you might have expected. Take a look at **Fig.04**, which features a side-by-side comparison of both opposing teams. Team Zeta consists of very defined shapes and reads reasonably well, in particular the Mother ship (top right) and Frigate (bottom right). In comparison, Team Alpha has very similar shapes. In fact, if there was no relative comparison of size then one would be hard pressed to distinguish a battleship from a normal pea shooter. So what does that mean? Does it mean the design is flawed? Does it mean the ships require more definition or defining characteristics? Or does it mean the ships require a return to the drawing board?

All of these issues, or variants thereof, are important issues to consider for the would-be concept designer of futuristic spaceships in the entertainment industry. A typical scenario could be that after weeks of iterations, each ship design is locked down and approved. Subsequently, for some unknown reason, let's say these designs get given to 3D



modellers and texture artists, and (God forbid) it progresses even further up the food chain to the maquette (scale model) modellers for use in a miniature set. Then the big day arrives and it's time to film the miniatures (or pre-visualisation). You have assembled all of these props and assets together, and perhaps have even planned a special effects shoot, but ... it just doesn't work. All the ships look similar, with

only a few distinguishing shapes and objects standing out. And that is the crux of it all.

To be able to work out all the main issues of a key frame scene that does not amount to a full illustration, has sufficient visual information to convey the scene, and does not lose any of the ambiguity of a "speed paint", the goal is again to develop a rigorous and straightforward

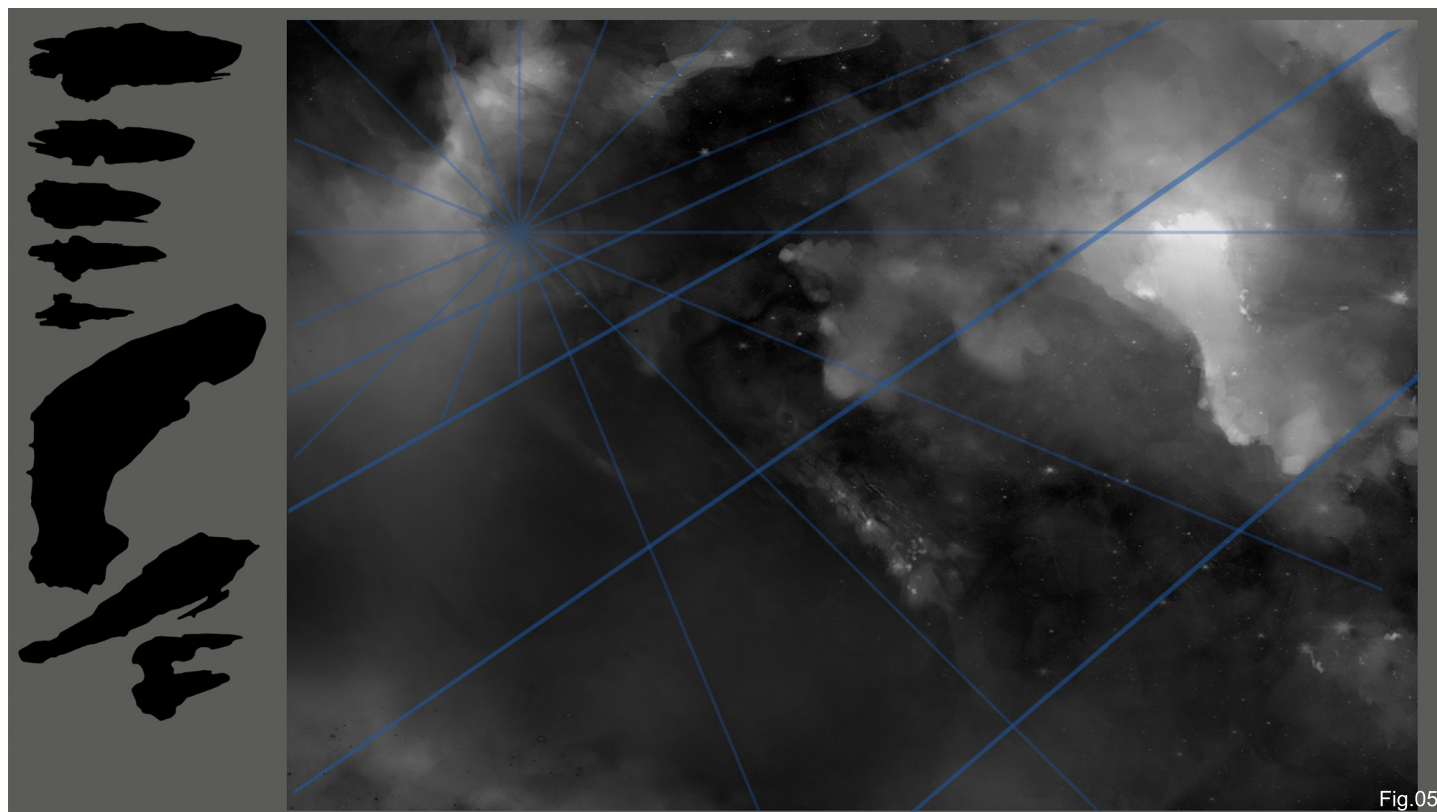




Fig.06

methodology that allows one to explore all the key tenets of the required scene, whilst still being fairly efficient in execution.

Opposing Forces – Team Alpha

For Team Alpha, we will gather a range of capital ships and a single personal fighter (see Fig.02). In the three-quarter view, the designs that seem to work well are the second (from the top) capital ship and the last two shapes at the bottom. What is really surprising is that while the top two ships have the most design, thought and functionality, their outlines may not work very well, whereas the ship with the least panel lines or design (fourth from the top) works quite well as a distinctive shape (Fig.04).

Opposing Forces – Team Zeta

In comparison, the requirements for Team Zeta (see Fig.03) meant producing a more distinctive (i.e. visually different) design. This invariably led to an elegant, vertically unusual, elongated design. Partially organic and smooth in comparison (this sometimes translates to alien looking*), it was a matter of lines and functionality working well (luck), from the first

draft (that did not require too many further iterations). However, of all the designs for Team Zeta, only the top and bottom forms echoed well with one another. The other forms were too similar to Team Alpha (the reasoning was thus: these elongated vessels would hide cleverly concealed arrays of weaponry that would open up, akin to the petals of a flower), and for the purposes of this workshop, they were curtailed to oblivion.

**Any design language deviating radically from known historical or current day objects/transport/ functions may be perceived as “alien looking” in nature. Even when a distinctive design becomes iconic and enters popular culture, it may be that until the general public is able to see, interact and physically use the new device, abode or transport, anything too radically different will appear alien looking. For example, if you were to rewind the clock back 100 years and tell people that one day every household would be able to have a small receiver device that showed moving pictures on a screen, you would be rightly laughed at and accused of being delusional. Go back 500-600 years and*

the world view would be so radically different that such current day appliances would have had most folk hanged or burnt as a demonic heretic for even entertaining such thoughts! To conclude, what this slightly more academic discussion means to simply state is this: 70:30. By that I mean that if you want to keep the designs within the realms of believability and the accepted world view, try to keep your design 70 percent rooted in existing design, and leave 30 percent to the realms of the creative imagination.

II: Key Scene Moments

The next crucial step is the process of idea generation. It is said that imagination - the ability to create worlds, to make real matter from mind and will - is the power of the Gods. As visual communicators of things that don't exist and things that become birthed into the current reality, artists have to uphold that responsibility. This step is a cross applicable methodology, ideal for all manner of creative generation, and arguably the most important element within the production of any storyboard, illustration or conceptual design (that is if you want to produce

a believable, functional, working scene that doesn't just consist of made-up shapes that fall apart on closer scrutiny).

From my own experimentation, I line up all the approved design forms in one corner of the digital canvas – similar to generating a paper cut-out of various approved designs and forms – and then literally scatter them across the chosen canvas (**Fig.05**).

Drawing a Line in the Sand

The next aspect is to generate a backdrop.

In this instance, I have re-used elements of backdrops produced in **Space Painting Tutorial Series: II – Transport: Part 8 – Space Stations (Issue #038)** and started working in greyscale. This allows us a rapid base from which to paint upon, and by the end of this workshop the canvas will have changed many times, to suit the final shots.

Next we make the choice of an arbitrary horizon and perspective (**see Fig.05**). As I often try to



Fig.07

say, there is no up, down, left or right in space. Therefore accurate space painting can be both chaotic and a bit sterile. Nevertheless, it is our duty to make it exciting, and to choose the right frame, aspect ratio and appropriate crop to make the shot work.

Establishing Shots

Using this basic canvas, I would recommend producing a grid of six to eight panels of equal aspect ratio. In this instance, we use the widescreen aspect ratio to conform to modern filmic conventions (smaller aspect ratios such

as 16:9 or 4:3 can be simply a cropped view; it is therefore easier to work wide and crop in small for each respective format). Try to work loose and fairly rapidly, spending an average of 20 – 30 minutes on each panel, working in the general forms and approximate shapes, and focusing primarily on mood, lighting and readability.

An analysis of the various shots, from top left to bottom right, are as follows (**Fig.06**):

- **Shot 1:** A great compositional shot with various similar shapes heading progressively in the same direction, and good use of light particles to lead the eye towards the artificial vanishing point/horizon
- **Shot 2:** This shot is more suitable for a wide shot, featuring a giant battleship heading into battle in the distance
- **Shot 3:** This shows the chaos of a battle in action – no real composition or defined viewpoint
- **Shot 4:** An alternative shot displaying the really large vessel of Team Zeta being attacked/attacking
- **Shot 5:** A good secondary shot showcasing an exchange of fire from a battleship about to be attacked
- **Shot 6:** Similar to Shot 5, but featuring another battleship being destroyed instead

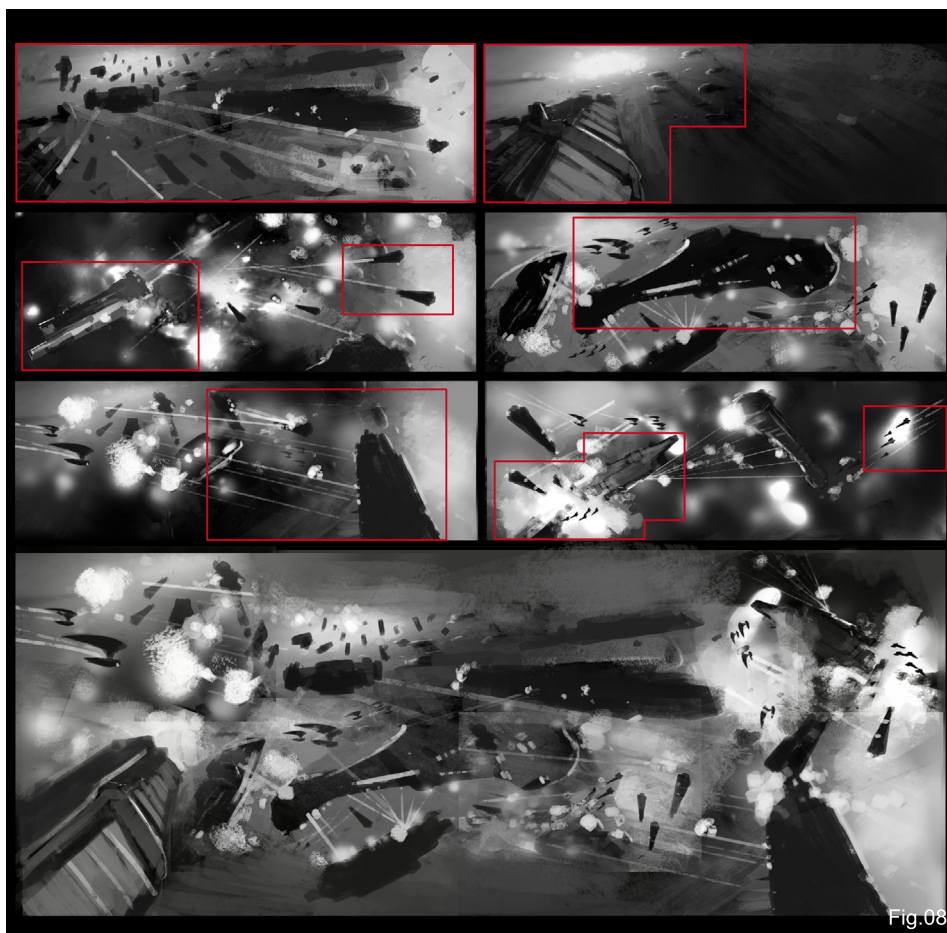


Fig.08

Ultimately, I prefer the first shot as our key visual scene. The thing is, while your first concept or first stab may sometimes be the best, it is not until you have worked out alternative shots that you can adequately make an informed decision.

Initial Compositing

Using the key visual thumb in Shot 1 (see **Fig.06**), the next task is to assemble all the various props into one chaotic mess (**Fig.07**). Yes, that's right. We want to recreate the chaos of a battle in space, similar to the various sky and naval battles of World War I and World War II. Albeit with more un-organised chaos, because frankly as much as I love the composition and simple direction of Shot 1, you would be hard pressed to find a battle executed in such a regimented fashion. Shot 1, in critical analysis, is almost too orderly and this ultimately translates into a very sedate, almost calm scene (see **Fig.07**). While you could use this shot as the opening of a space/naval battle, if you have one singular painting to represent the chapter and a key role of this act, it should be more engaging. Aim to thrust the viewer right into the action. This can normally be achieved by having a camera viewpoint set up just behind or over the shoulder of any transport your camera is focusing on. So that's it; Shot 1 must go now, unfortunately.

With reference to **Fig.08**, we take all the best elements of the six panels (noted by the various areas selected in red), and consolidate them into one miraculous, organised, chaotic mess. This involves some degree of overlay painting and re-painting to produce some sort of coherent mess. Notice that Shot 1 provides the main backbone around which a more complicated battle scene is shaped.

Exploring Alternative Shots

Lastly, this is a good juncture to explore various



Fig.09

alternative shots that could be obtained by cropping and zooming in on various aspects of your cinematic set piece illustration (**Fig.09**).

The good news is that you can always produce a good composition with the right shot and the right crop. Just ensure your canvas is wide enough and of sufficient resolution to handle

this. The current piece is now approximately 4500 pixels wide and thus fully adaptable to any crop size.

III: The Money Shot

Now that the process of idea generation has been explored, we can get down to the nitty-gritty of producing the "money shot".

Proof of Concept

The entertainment industry works roughly like this: a production director, game team or writer has a great idea for the next great big movie, animation or game product. Be it a new IP (intellectual property), establishing a successful continuing sequel or an individual pitch to various investors, publishers or venture

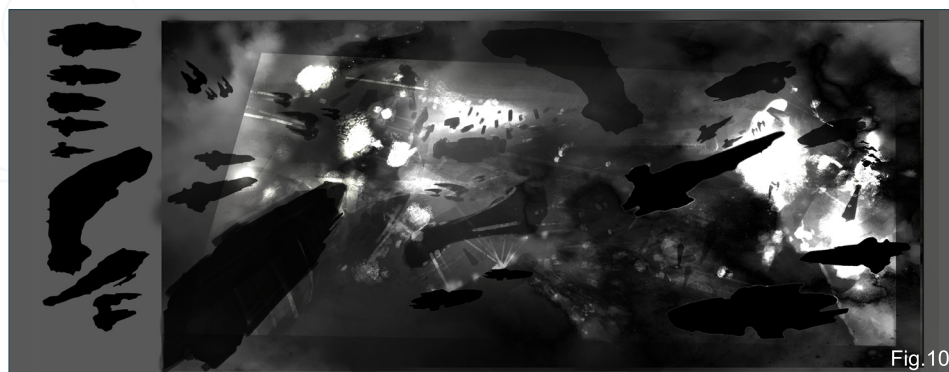


Fig.10

capitalist, it is all about producing a convincing pitch. Let's say your team has produced a rock-solid pitch with great ideas, a good script, and strong actor line up/game play, and have also discussed with relevant interested parties about your upcoming film/product. The thing that gets the product a green light is producing a) Proof of Concept (a.k.a. pre-production/line 0, whereby you can be relatively creative without the restraints of a script/game idea), and b) Key Scene Visuals (late pre-production/line 1, whereby some rules are set in stone and you need to explore the more exciting elements of your game/movie). If you're successful at getting over the first hurdle, then the next few stages are roughly the elements of production.

Production in games means passing through a rigorous set of monthly and quarterly deadlines that show the progress of the game in production and ensure that the objectives

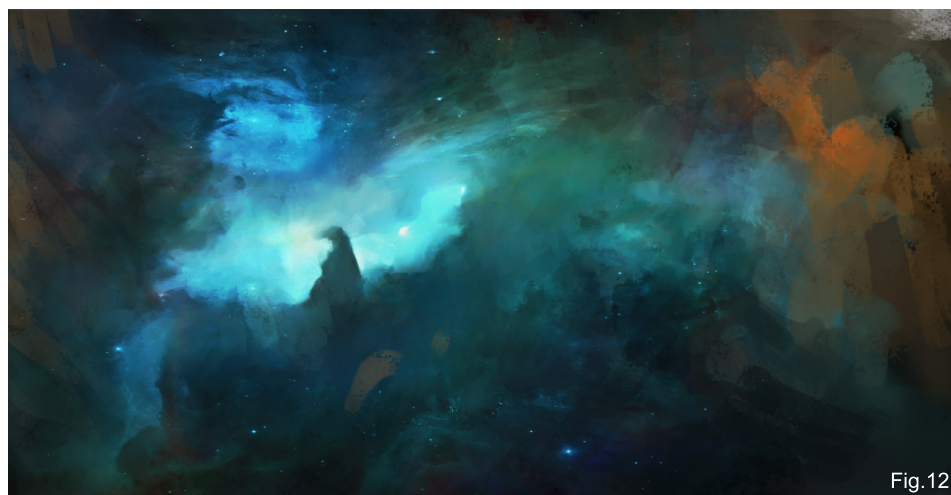


Fig.12

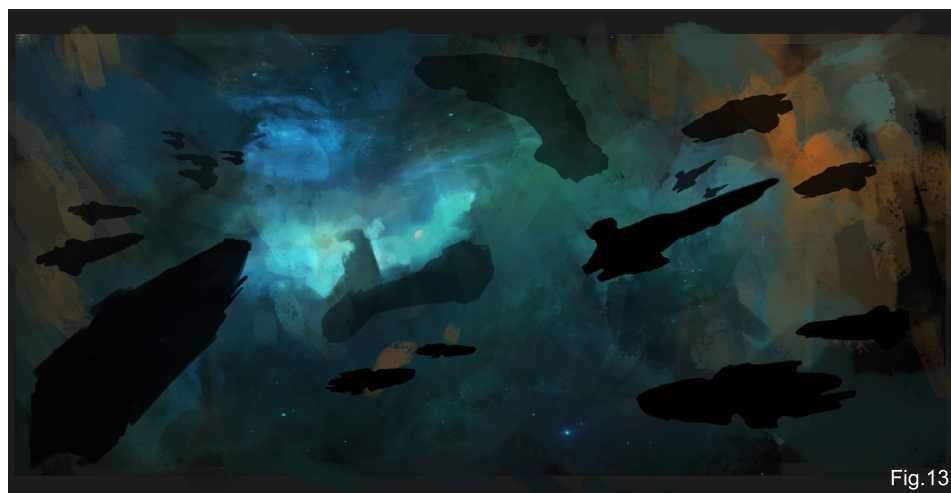


Fig.13

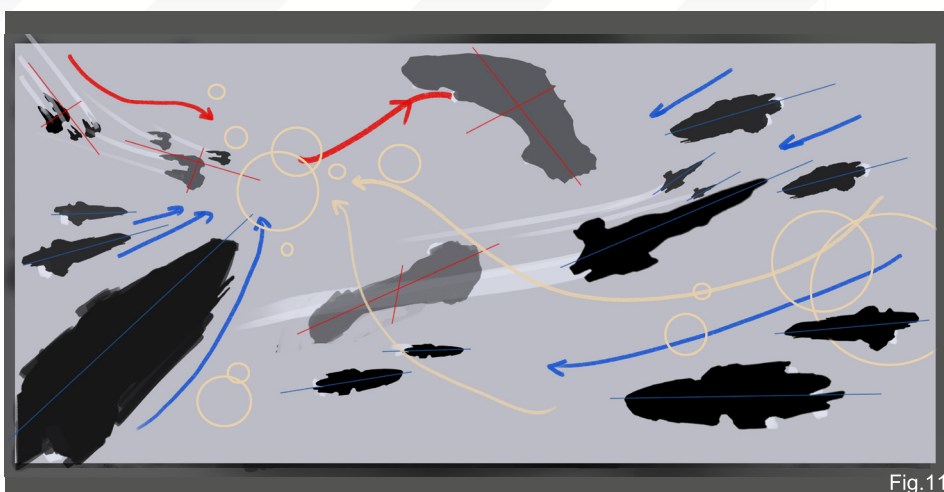


Fig.11

agreed to in your company/team's contract with the developer, publisher or investors are being achieved.

Production in movies means getting your initial proof of concept into production, and being on site to produce concepts, line art and further key visual scenes for each segment/act of your

movie so that sets are made, props are built, and the whole film is produced on time and within budget.

The Composite Shot

With reference to **Fig.10**, the amalgamated greyscale shot incorporates all the various elements, shapes and forms. It all looks relatively confusing and is without any visual focus. The explosions are all relatively of the same luminosity and all the forms are of the same black, silhouetted, placeholder ships. So let's take a step back now and simplify.

Fig.11 shows a better sense of organised chaos, whereby various ships are actually grouped together in relative positions. Grouping a set of similar ships in a formation can allow the viewer to have a perceived perspective:

- **Yellow:** Denotes various explosions and the overall (planned) visual direction of the composition
- **Blue:** Groups of Team Alpha ships with their own respective axes and grouped vanishing points
- **Red:** Groups of Team Zeta ships heading in an opposing direction

Greyscale to Colour

Now begins the trickier bit: converting a greyscale value image into full Technicolor. While it's both hard and challenging to make a greyscale image look good in colour, it's not impossible. A greyscale image converted to

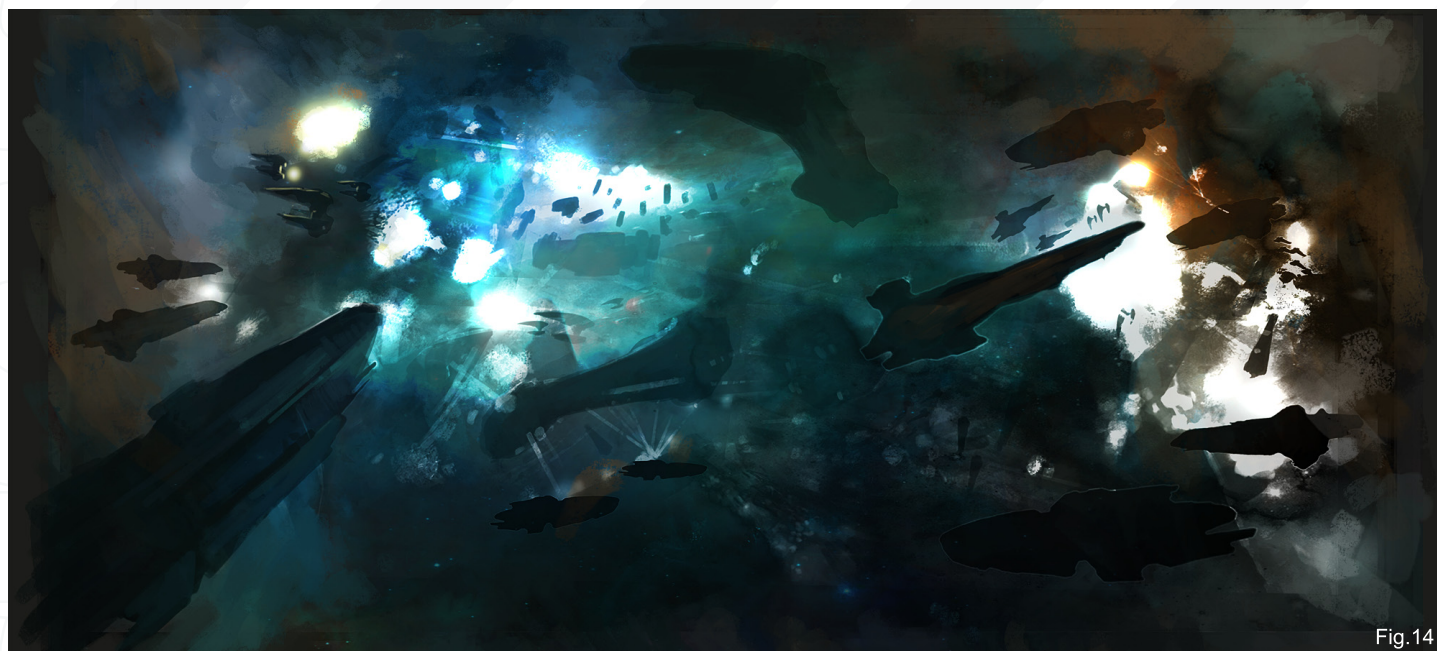


Fig.14

colour always has that overly-saturated, overly-dark feel, and these issues can be compensated for by some degree of “to-ing and fro-ing”.

The fact is that it will probably take a certain amount of experimentation, or someone showing you how it works for them, before you come up with an acceptable working method. In space, this can work with limited success, although I do find that painting in colour from the word go has a more painterly/illustrative finish. On reflection, it could be that there is insufficient random noise/hue/saturation when we try to add our own colours onto a greyscale base.

So let's have a look at some different methods of successful conversion:

- Overlay an old photo/texture painted image on a low opacity (3-5%)
- Photoshop > Select > Colour Range method (feel free to do some self exploration to achieve this method)
- Establish a monochromatic colour (e.g. Hue/Saturation set on Colourise) and add thin washes of complementary or adjacent colour
- Straightforward over-painting

In this workshop we will opt for the last option: the simple, straightforward method (Fig.12).

On a new layer (100% opacity, normal) you can simply paint to establish various colours and complementaries, which then generate a vague and pleasant-looking set of hard-edged (coloured) clouds. These can represent various nebulas or slightly coloured gas clouds (see Fig.12). However, it's important to remember something that's been mentioned in previous chapters of this tutorial: one can often find space vehicles within gas clouds. This tends to denote that one is flying on the periphery or within a nebula, which ultimately implies that either your vehicle is capable of escaping/nullifying the dense gravitational and strong forces of the universe, or is purely fictional.

The next step is to slowly reintroduce the cut-out shapes of various groups of ships that recede into the distance and to ascertain readability (Fig.13). In addition, we can take the time to develop our backdrop further, and we can afford to blend far distant objects and clouds into a homogeneous tone.

Following this comes the trickier bit: introducing all of the mid-ground to background explosions and elements. A simple method is to set your image on luminosity and lower the opacity (Fig.14). You'll find that this introduces many elements of noise and mess; unfortunately this

is just a necessary evil and any undesirable elements simply need to be painted out.

The painting may appear ugly at this stage, but this is a natural part of the process and it's simply a matter of ordering the chaos to improve things. Glaze objects in the distance with a light (pseudo) atmospheric perspective (reasoned as a light dusting of space dust) to gently separate the mid-ground and background elements.

In addition, you can further blend and darken explosions in the distance into the background to achieve a more homogenised background.

Correction & Detailing

The next few aspects will vary according to the skill of the artist. Seasoned artists can achieve suggestive detail with calculated strokes (made to look deceptively simple due to their impressive understanding of the basics). Alternatively, other artists can achieve a similar result with some step-wise methodology, practise, determination, the correction of strokes and the establishment of the basics (composition, lighting, perspective, colour, contrast, separation of objects, use of rim lights, bounced lights, ambient and directional lights, and so on).

Veering back onto topic, it is a matter of starting to add some rudimentary details to our

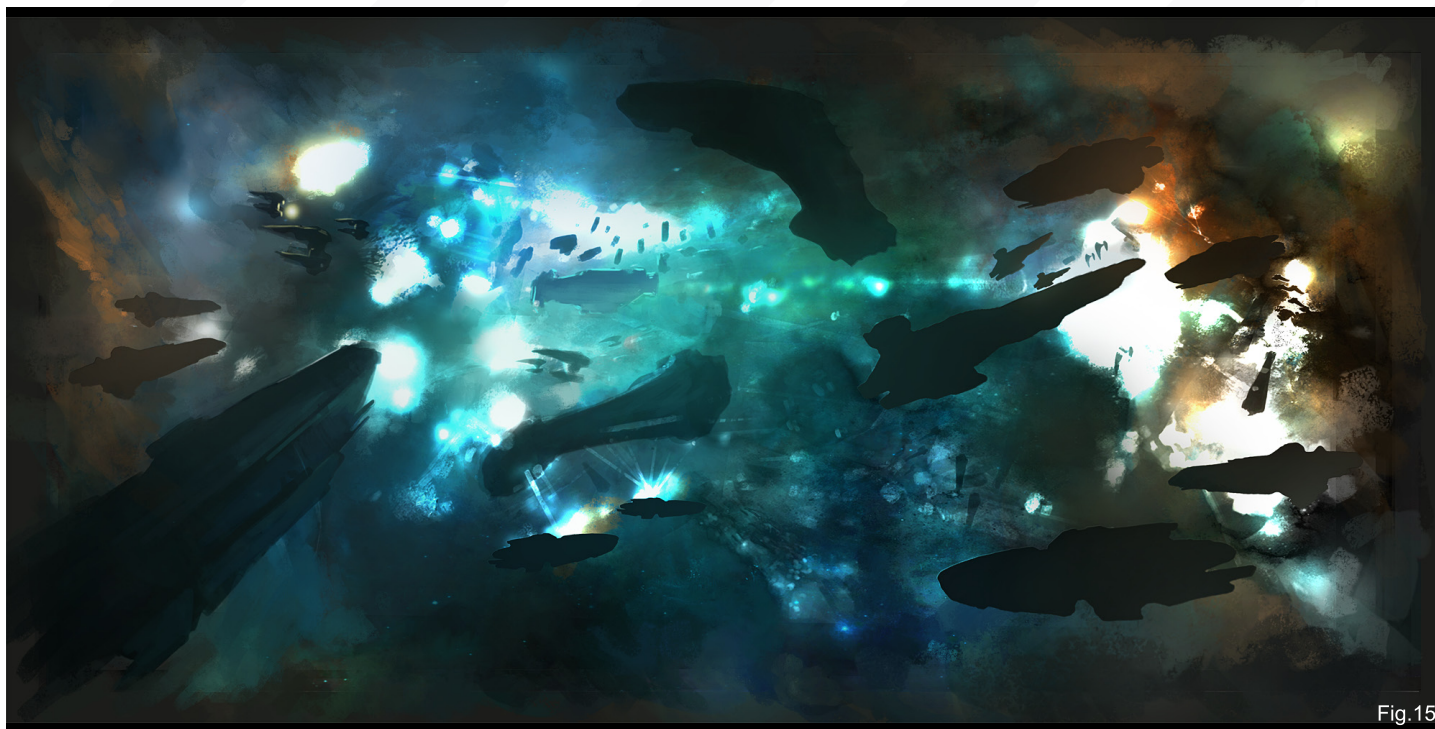


Fig.15

foreground objects (**Fig.15**). Panel lines and sheets of metal can achieve an even sheen by painting parallel strokes according to their relative planes. In the top-right segment there is a feeling of empty, useless space, and so perhaps another explosion could be added to generate further interest. I am mindful that the eye is led towards the far distant light (top third left), and that adding another closer, brighter light source may distract compositionally. The explosions is therefore rapidly converted into various ships coming out of hyperspace and being attacked and/or surrounded. Some even display the first signs of an explosive shockwave of contained gasses, debris and hot plasma (**Fig.16**).

Cropping into part of the image now, the initial thumb in Shot 1 (see **Fig.07**) is re-explored in a crude manner, replete with trails of lights and cannons being fired (**Fig.17**).

Level 2

Now that the initial elements have been worked up, there is the opportunity to add that extra level of realism and a second level of detailing. In my own vocabulary, I break the colouring and detailing of an image into Level 1 (30%) and

Level 2 (70%). A very high quality visual may even necessitate further effort, texturing and super-fine tweaking which would amount to a third level: Level 3 (90% complete). I usually

find that when left to one's own device, most images tend to be considered finished at a Level 2 of detail/composition and lighting. Achieving a near-finished, super-level of detail is often only



Fig.16

achieved with constant feedback and correction, such as when working with a client, or on a piece being considered for portfolio/illustrative cover/art gallery purposes.

For the purpose of this workshop, we are only interested in achieving a Level 2 finish. This is mainly because of relative real-world time constraints; you often do not have more than one or two days maximum to work on a large, complex piece. So let's have a look at the overall composite illustration (**Fig.18**).

Most of the placeholder objects have their shapes defined by relative rim lights, based on the ambient and direct lighting. The top right segment shows a well defined shockwave; the lower right segment shows a battleship being attacked by the larger organic Zeta Team, and its shields being activated. Note that the Alpha group utilises solid laser beams that arc from one defined point to another, whereas the Zeta group utilises greenish proton torpedo-like shots that are more powerful but are fewer across the illustration. What we hope to get across is the immense strength of the Zeta group – it necessitates only a large, solid mother ship and relatively fewer, well-armoured ships/frigates.

Some further close-ups now show us the rough details of the use of local directional lighting to colourise the foreground elements (**Fig.19**). In the top segment, the Alpha fighter utilises a warmer colour on its lower aspect, whilst the upper portions are cast in relative relief, thus producing an under-lit finish. Whereas, the



Fig.17

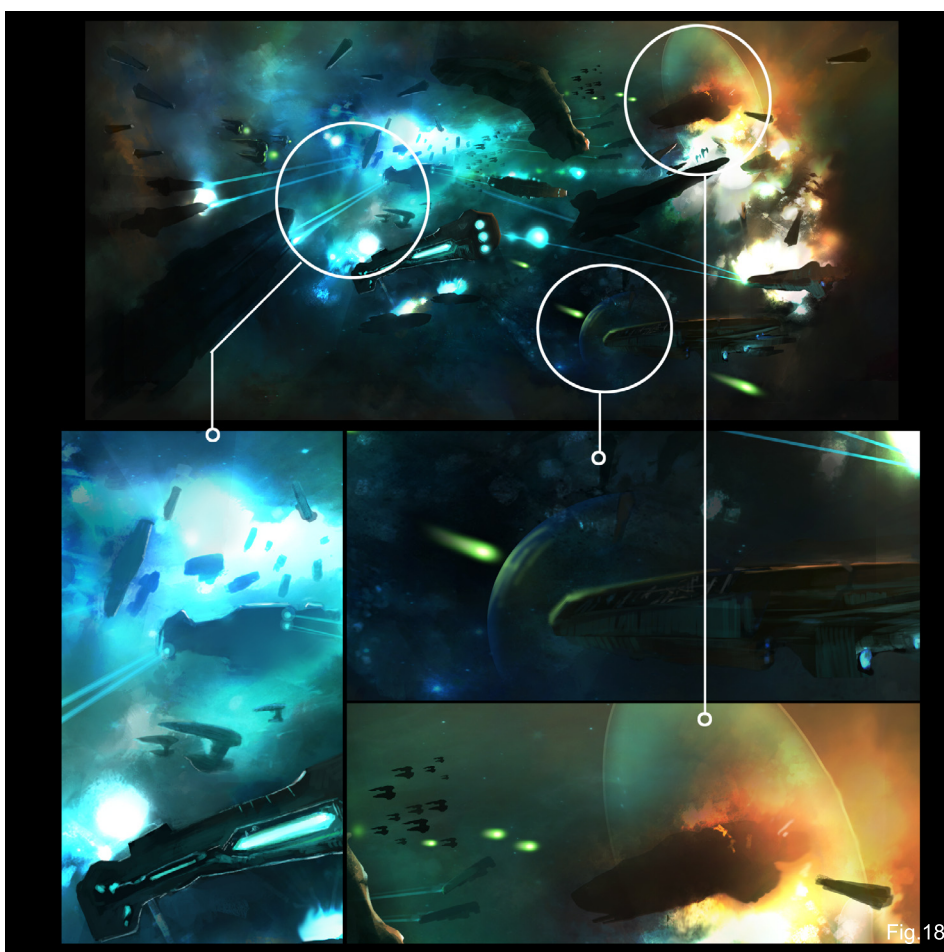


Fig.18

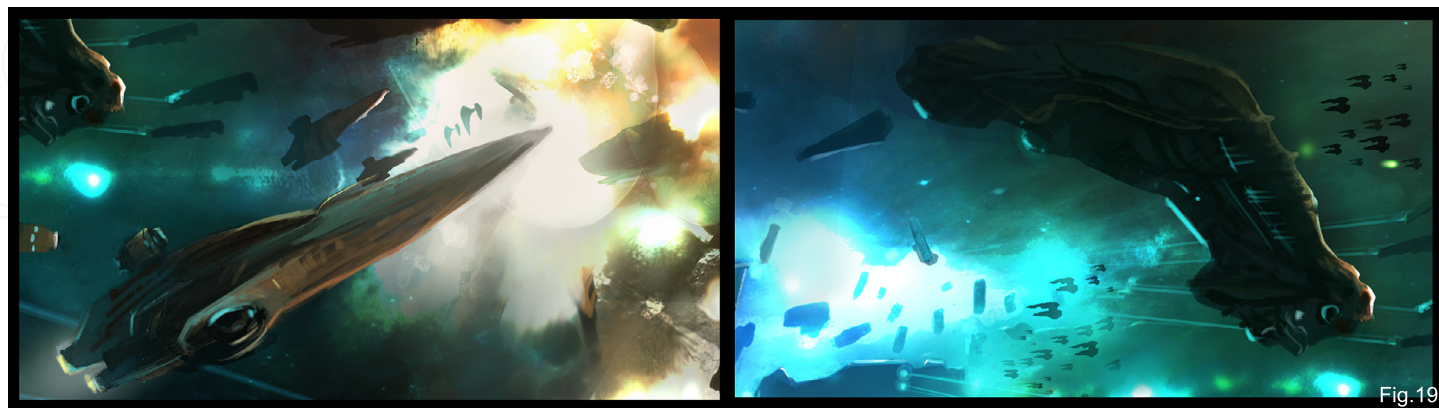


Fig.19



Fig.20

main Zeta mother ship uses a more muted and narrow band of values that are close to the mid-to-background colours. These will help to seat the object into the mid-ground.

Finally, the subtle use of volumetric cast shadows can just add that additional element of realism. We finish off with a few additional corrections and blend it all into one final giant (organised) chaotic clash of light, colour and space vessels attacking and counter attacking one another, with various groups having their own personal dog fights (Fig.20).

Alas, we have not yet finished. This is because we have forgotten to tell the basic story behind our image!

IV: A Story without Words

The final aspects of a Level 2 detail (going into Level 3) would be what I liken to post-processing. This means the majority of the painting in this image is complete, and from here on it's just a matter of fiddling and fudging with various cropping angles, filters, contrasts, and colour/lighting adjustments.

Now, there are various ways of setting up a good composition. One can be naturally gifted

or take the pains to construct good elements of composition from the get go, or alternatively you can think like a photographer. Imagine, you have a standard 35mm (F1.4) fixed lens and you are asked to take a few good snapshots of this space battle scene. Now, assume that

exposure, ISO and speed are not an issue, and that the only issue you have is to take a good shot. Utilising your basic selection tool, or crop tool in Photoshop, rotate your selection and take virtual snapshots of compositions you desire (Fig.21). Sounds like common sense, and

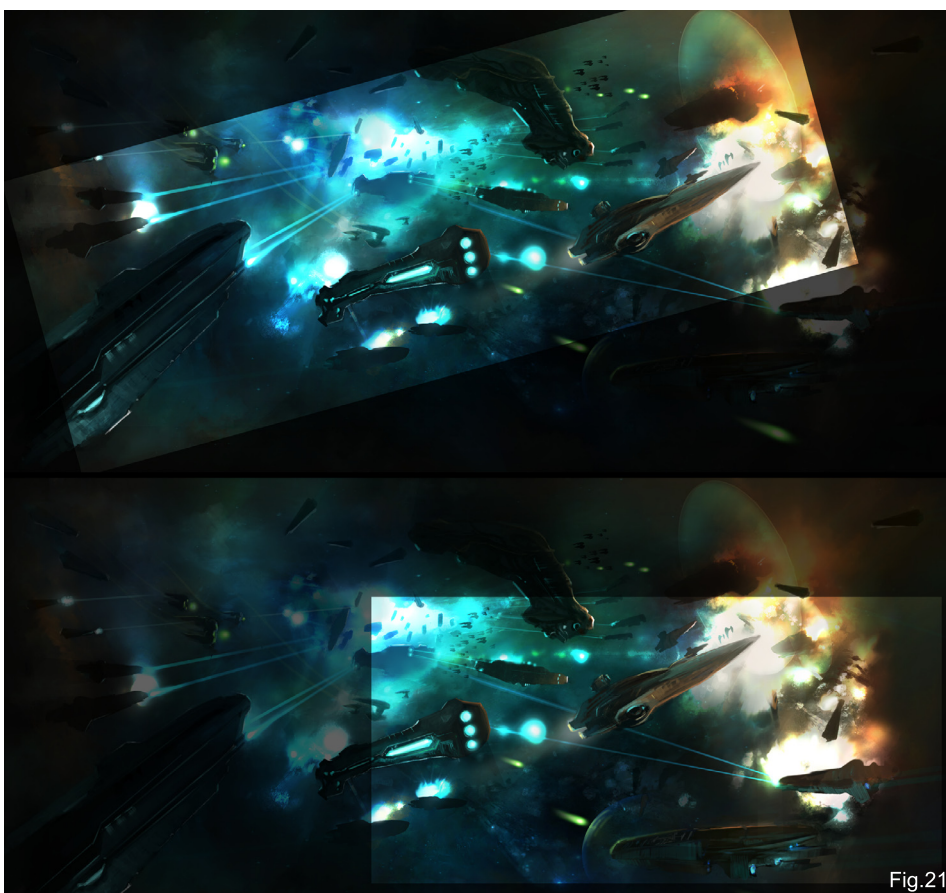


Fig.21

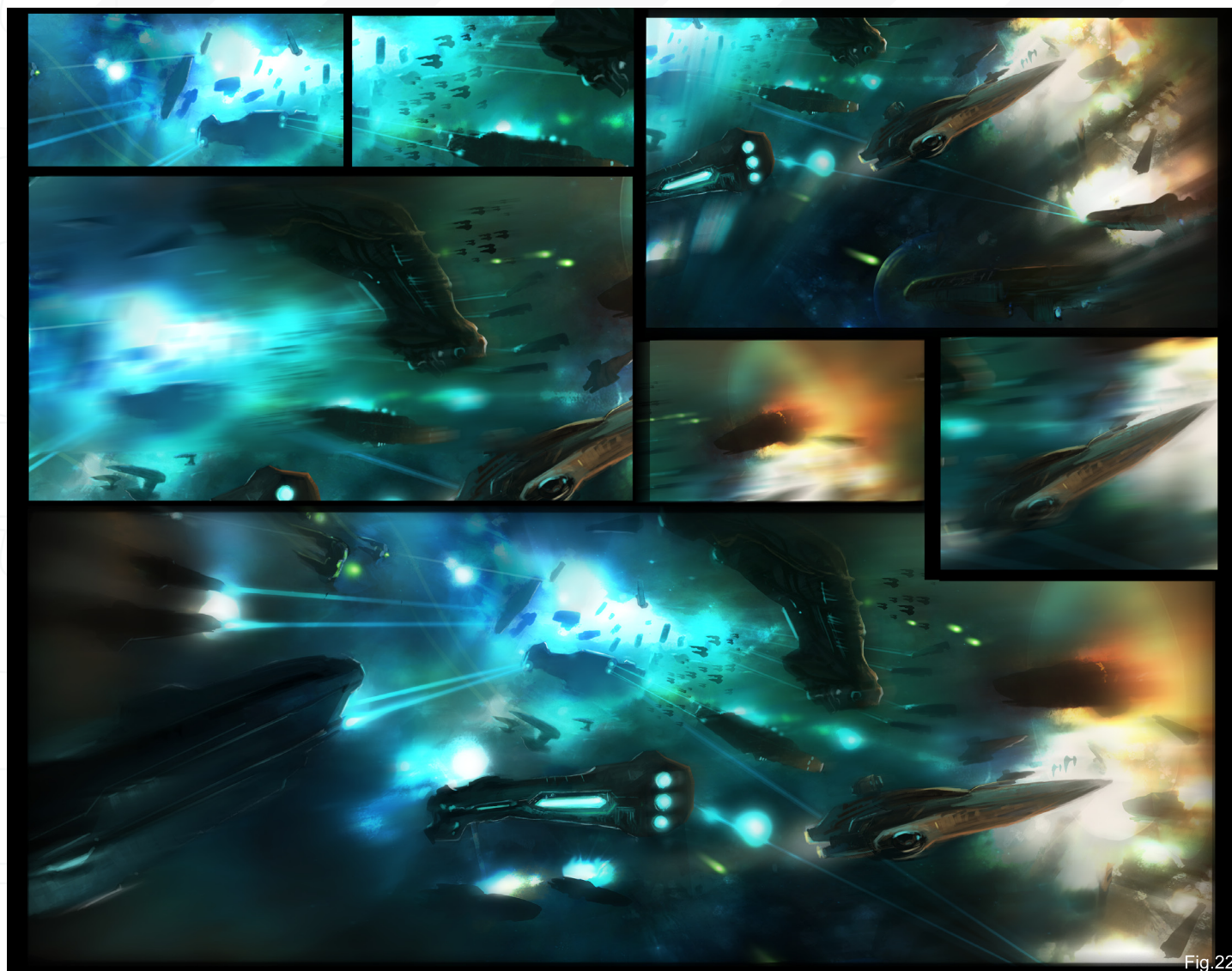


Fig.22

clearly does not sound like high level artistry! And that is the beauty of it: it's simple and under-used.

The reason why I choose a 35mm fixed lens (you can use a wide angle or panoramic fixed format lens) is because, as a photographer,

one has to either move forward or backwards to get the right composition. This means you have to develop a good eye for subject matter and composition, without resorting to automated features or tricks. Seriously, I would recommend a cheap camera/camera phone to every artist so that you can take snapshots wherever you

go and practise the art of composition (and lighting/colour/subject matter/perspective). This will subconsciously translate across into your art in many ways. And thus, you can take various selections and generate a simple storyboard out of these selections at will.

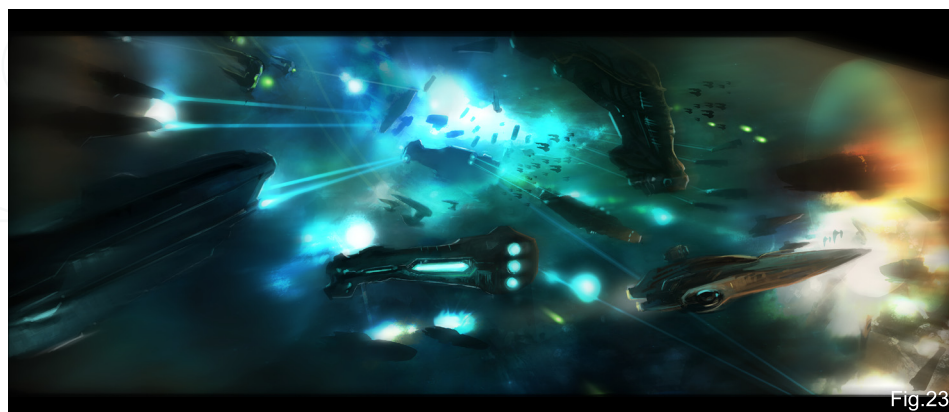


Fig.23

Have a look at **Fig.22** as a basic storyboard. The storyboard/panels can be read generally from left to right, top to bottom, in any fashion. And in essence, it should tell the basic story of a space battle. The really clever thing is the simple and effective use of motion blur and radial zoom (blur). By making duplicates of your selections you can replicate fast shots by tracking your focal object (the background is blurred in the direction of your camera's relative speed and velocity) or by panning out further to



take a wide shot. Take care to erase/paint-out blurred areas to bring back various objects of visual interest into focus.

Personally, my ideal shot would be embodied by the panel in **Fig.23**, which has echoes of the Shot 1 thumb (see **Fig.07**), but now with elements of motion and blur. Suddenly your illustration is transformed from a static, clear,

focused image into something that comes alive and becomes more filmic. Do note that motion blur should not be used as a crutch and should never replace a decent understanding of the basics, but it's certainly useful to help sell the idea of action.

Conclusion

This workshop hopefully demonstrates one

methodology that you can experiment with in your day-to-day workflow. There are lots of other workflows out there; from constantly interesting ones, to totally counter intuitive workflows that surprise and may be unsuitable for some artists, but are perfectly fitting to others. Thinking cross-laterally, you can also apply similar optimisation and thought generation workflows in other related genres, e.g. character and creature



design, landscape and cinematic set pieces, and so on.

In conclusion, the main things to get out of this short article are:

- Find the right shot
- Ensure the forms read
- Apply sufficient visual contrast
- Be prepared to apply judicious artistic

license versus your own core values, if the scene warrants it

- Optimise your workflow

As ever, thank you for the constant feedback and interest in these tutorials. They are hopefully small insights into the personal and commercial methodologies developed to suit our studio's (**Opus Artz Ltd**) day to day operations,

and perhaps, partly, a pathway to guide you on your own personal quest.

Dr Chee Ming Wong

For more from this artist visit:

<http://www.opusartz.com>

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“My original idea was to create a picture of a tropical landscape in a thunderstorm, with mountain peaks that were encrusted with lightning conductors so that lightning would flow from one peak to the next through the entire picture”

THUNDERSTORM

MAKING OF BY DMITRY MITSUK

Dmitry Mitsuk takes us through the steps that led to the creation of his image “Thunderstorm”.



MAKING OF THUNDERSTORM

Created In:

Photoshop

Introduction

I have always been impressed by the beauty and level of detail other matte painters have been able to produce in their images of natural environments, and so I decided to try and create my very own jungle landscape. This was my first experience of trying to create a realistic jungle, and I also wanted to capture some unique landscape elements that you wouldn't normally see in daily life. As you'll see as you look through the steps of this article, the image started as a sketch of a potential real life environment, and progressed into a more interesting piece with a dark atmosphere. I wanted to capture both the curiosity and imagination of the viewer with the final result.

Step 1: Sketch

I started my work as a simple sketch, although I had a good idea of what my final image was going to look like (**Fig.01**). I used a standard hard edge brush with the opacity set at 20%-30%, and then started drawing freely, trying to find the range of colours that I wanted to see in my work (**Fig.02**). At first I didn't pay too much attention to the final size of the picture; as my work progressed I kept expanding the

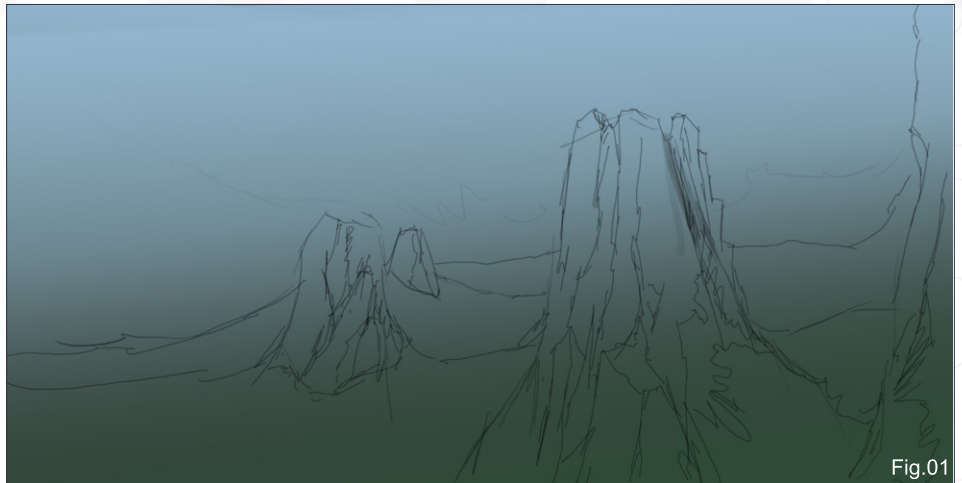


Fig.01

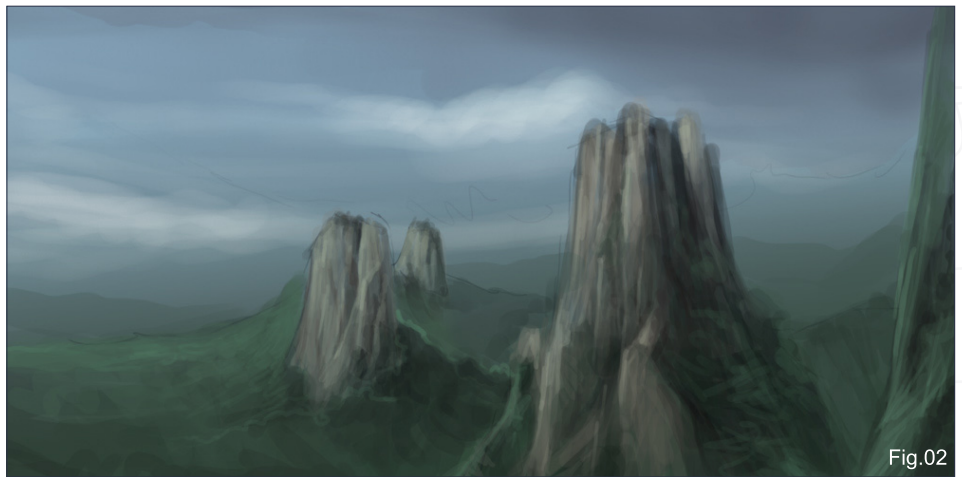


Fig.02

canvas when I needed to. My original idea was to create a picture of a tropical landscape in a thunderstorm, with mountain peaks that were encrusted with lightning conductors so that lighting would flow from one peak to the next through the entire picture. Later, I realised that lightning's brightness would steal the viewer's attention from the rest of the picture, and so I wisely decided against the lightning conductors.



Fig.04

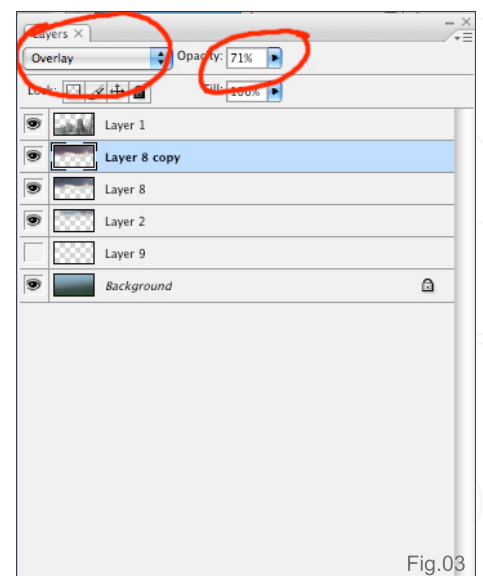


Fig.03

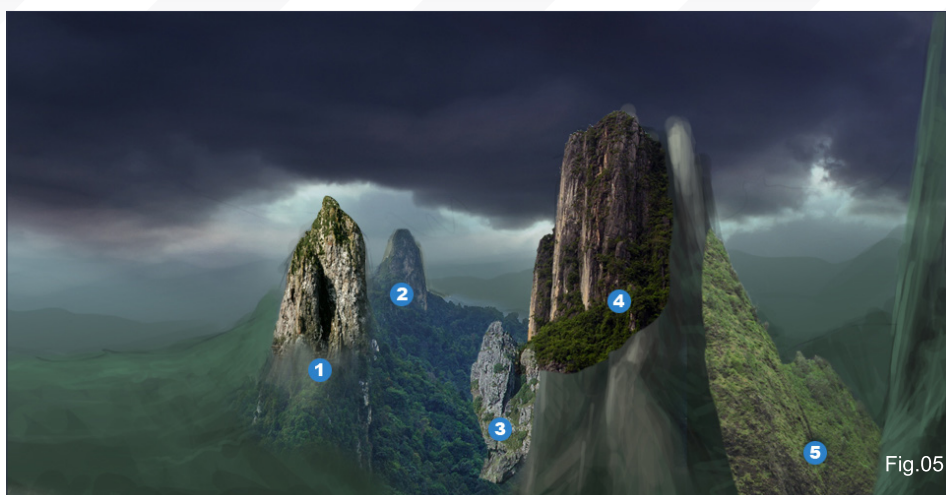
Step 2: Mood

Once I was satisfied with the composition of my sketch, I started looking at various pictures of skies that would help to set the mood I wanted in my work. Once I'd found the photos I was looking for, I imported them into Photoshop and

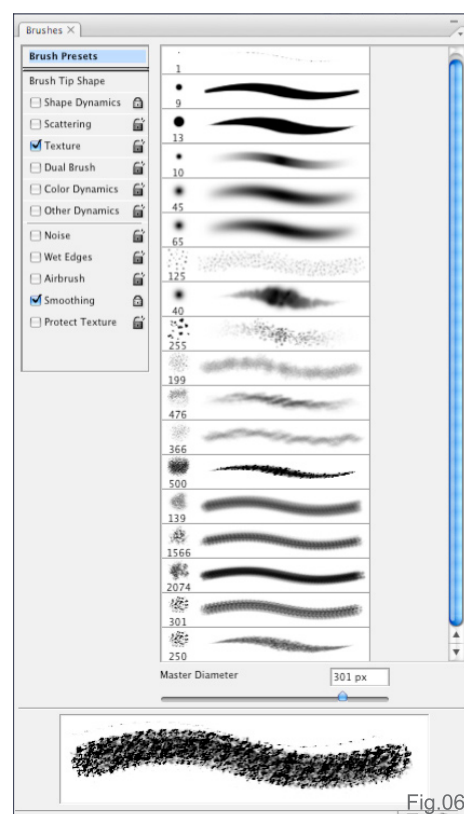
changed the layer mode to Multiply. I played around with the layer transparency settings and decided to duplicate a layer and introduce it using the Overlay mode (**Fig.03**). By doing this, I created a gloomier thunderstorm mood (**Fig.04**). Another of my goals was to create more complex clouds, in terms of both detail and lighting; however I decided to postpone this until after I'd finished the detail on the mountains and overgrowth.

Step 3: References

Most of the time, I try to draw as much as possible in my paintings, however this time I wanted to create something that looked very realistic and detailed. After thinking it over, I spent several hours looking for the right photos of mountains, rocks, bushes and clouds. It's very rare to find pictures that agree with each other; most of the time you're left making



the best of what is on hand. Using the Lasso tool I cropped various pieces of mountains and transformed them in order to use them as Overlay layers in the picture. At this time I didn't pay too much attention to the difference in colours as they each had their own separate layer and I was going to balance them later on.



In my opinion, it's much more important at this stage to find pieces that are similar in terms of texture and lighting.

Step 4: Integration

When my picture had the first elements of the mountains (**Fig.05**), I started working on the colour of the main mountain using the Colour Balance adjustments to make it more in tune with the gloomy sky of the picture. To achieve this I also used texture brushes (**Fig.06**). I started to draw in the missing elements at the same time as correcting colours of various

pieces in order to make the colour balance between them. Using the Clone Stamp tool I cloned several overgrowth pieces from various pictures and tried to distribute them evenly throughout the picture. During this process I used my own brushes as well as the Eraser and Stamp tools; I kept drawing until the seams between the various pieces that made up the image became unnoticeable.

The left side of the picture also received the same treatment. Using a mask I created a selection field for the distant mountains, and using adjustment layers I changed the saturation, contrast and colour balance in such a way as to create a feeling of depth in my work (Fig.07).



Fig.09



Fig.10

After drawing more mountains in the background I used a mask to add mist and vapour effects to the horizon as well. Then, using brushes that imitated plants, I tried to add the maximum amount of detail to the mountain on the right edge of the picture (Fig.08). I did this to direct the attention of the viewer to the left, from then on using the mountains to similarly direct the viewer throughout the entire composition (Fig.09).

Step 5: Sky & Lighting

I decided here to go back to working on the sky in the picture, with the main task being to add lighting effects to it so that parts would be lit up with sunlight, and other parts would still be in



Fig.11

the gloom of a thunderstorm. The left side of the sky was taken from a photograph which was overworked using the Soft Light layer blending mode. In the next step I lightened up the upper middle part of the sky, which was done using airbrush and cloud shaped brushes. This layer was set to Soft Light mode at opacity 55%.

Using the same steps, with the exception of using the Multiply mode rather than Soft Light, I darkened the right side of the painting. I painted the lightning on a separate layer, which I used in Overlay mode and duplicated. Then using Screen mode I added glow to the lightning by using the blur surface filter (**Fig.10**).

Step 6: Finishing Touches

On a separate layer I used a soft round brush and Eraser with a low opacity to create the mist



Fig.12

that rises from the top of the growth up towards the sky (**Fig.11 & Fig.12**). Later, whilst reviewing the picture, I decided to add a waterfall flowing from one of the mountains in order to liven up

the overall environment. I used a picture of a waterfall as a basis and carefully used the Lasso tool to cut pieces and re-introduce them into the picture, adding finishing touches to the edges of the water using a soft Eraser. In order to properly integrate a waterfall into my painting I again had to balance the lighting of the surrounding environment as well as add some plants onto the sides to conceal the edges (**Fig.13**).



Fig.13

As I was not sure about the colour range of the final picture, I created two Fill layers – one with blue gamma and one with hazel – and introduced them using the Overlay layer blending mode at 12% opacity. In the end I chose the hazel, which gave the painting a warmer colour range (**Fig.14**).

Conclusion

Creating a unique picture is challenging, but I found that my constant expansion of the image made it much more interesting and exciting as my work progressed. I hope you've found this "making of" interesting and thanks for reading.

Dmitry Mitsuk

For more from this artist please contact:
mitsuk2003@list.ru





Fig. 14



Vancouver Film School alumni credits include **Across the Universe** Geeta Basantani, Digital Composer **Alias** Scott Dewis, Visual Effects Artist **Ant Bully** Ben Sanders, Character Animator | Rani Naamani, Animator | Ernesto Bottger, Character Animator **AVP: Alien Vs. Predator** Shawn Walsh, Color & Lighting Technical Director **Babel** Luis Blackaller, Storyboard Artist | Lon Molnar, Visual Effects Supervisor **Battlestar Galactica** Daniel Osaki, Lead Modeler | Megan Majewski, 3D Animator | Alec McClymont, 3D Artist **Blizzard Entertainment** Alvaro Buendia, Cinematic Artist **Bolt** Lino Di Salvo, Supervising Animator/Voice of Vinnie **Charlotte's Web** Aruna Inversin, Digital Composer | Adam Yaniv, Character Animator | Tony Etienne, Lead Lighter Kristin Sedore, Lighter **Chicago** Lon Molnar, Animation Supervisor **The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe** Kristin Sedore, Lighter | Shawn Walsh, Lighter | Adam Yaniv, Character Animator **The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian** Andreas Hikel, Pre-Visualization Artist | Christoph Schinko, Character Animator | Jami Gigot, Senior Layout Artist **Cloverfield** Nicholas Markel, Pre-Visualization Supervisor **Constantine** Aruna Inversin, Digital Composer **The Dark Knight** Pietro Ponti, Lead CG Lighting Artist **Dead Like Me** Daniel Osaki, Visual Effects Artist | Alec McClymont, 3D Artist **Diablo III** Alvaro Buendia, Cinematic Artist | Steven Chen, Cinematic Artist **Family Guy** Michael Loya, Storyboard Artist **Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer** Arun Ram-Mohan, Lighting Technical Director | Shawn Walsh, Visual Effects Executive Producer | Jessica Alcorn, Composer **Flags of our Fathers** Aruna Inversin, Digital Composer **Gears of War (VG)** Scott Dossett, Animator

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“I don’t like working on plain-looking backgrounds. Adding a texture and some varying colour keeps me interested in an image and also helps me to achieve the desired mood with a bit more ease.”

MAKING OF BY EJIWA A EBENEKE

SNOWFALL

Ejiwa A. Ebeneke shares how she used Photoshop to create the image “Snowfall”.

MAKING OF SNOWFALL

Created In:

Photoshop

This image actually started as a random sketch. I had decided I just wanted to draw something purple, and since people are one of my favourite painting subjects, I decided to paint a girl with purple as the colour scheme. After leaving the sketch alone for some time, I decided to work on it some more.

Step 1:

I began this image with a plain background in Photoshop onto which I splashed on some



Fig.03



Fig.01

colours and overlaid a texture (**Fig.01**). This was because I don't like working on plain-looking backgrounds. Adding a texture and some varying colour keeps me interested in an image and also helps me to achieve the desired mood with a bit more ease.

Step 2:

I then created a new layer and started the sketch. I blocked in the colours with a large hard round brush and then roughly added detail with a smaller size of the same blocking brush (**Fig.02**). I also created a new layer for the hair, and roughly painted it in. It was at this point that I decided to leave it alone and forgot about it for a while.

Step 3:

Coming back to it later, I decided to improve upon it, as I liked the direction it was taking. I further detailed her face and shoulder, using a

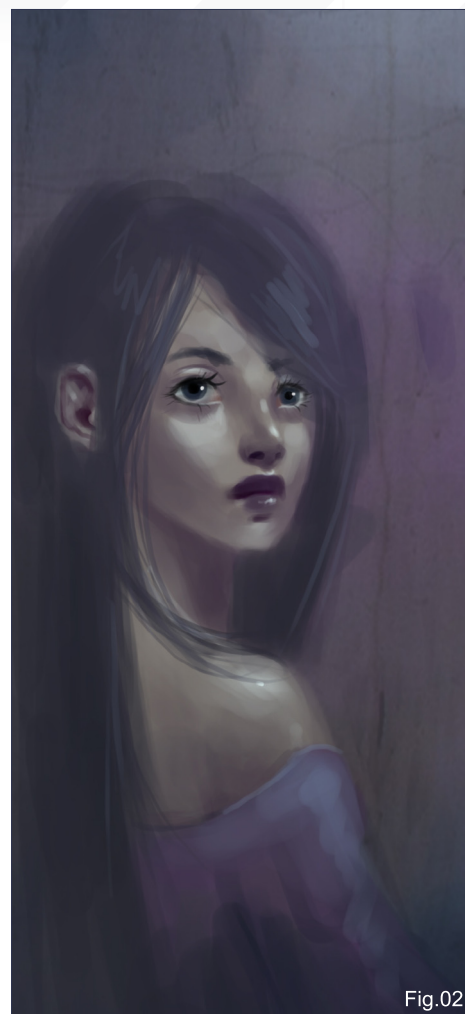


Fig.02

small hard round brush and soft round brush to smooth it out as I went along. I also worked a little more on the hair and robe, added some makeup, and decided that I wanted her to have purplish-blue eyes (**Fig.03**).

Step 4:

By now it was time to start the detailing the hair. After running through a few possibilities, I decided on the one shown in **Fig.04**. It was quite rough at this stage but that would be taken care of later. For the mask, I painted its shape in deep purple on a separate layer, and set the layer to overlay in order to achieve the effect that can be seen in the image. A little more work was done on the robe, overlaying a texture to make its appearance a bit more interesting.

Step 5:

I spent more time smoothing out the skin and features. The hair was refined by first blocking in

the strands with a medium soft round brush and then adding in the details with a smaller hard round brushes with shape dynamics turned on. I decided that the background was too light to depict the mood I was aiming for, so I duplicated the coloured background layer and set the layer mode to overlay (**Fig.05**). To add some realism to the skin, I made a new layer and added some skin blemishes with a small medium-soft round brush with scatter turned on. I then turned off the scatter and added the slightly larger beauty spots beneath her eye and on her forehead (**Fig.06**).

Step 6:

Some final refinement of the hair was done and the snow was added. I made the snow with

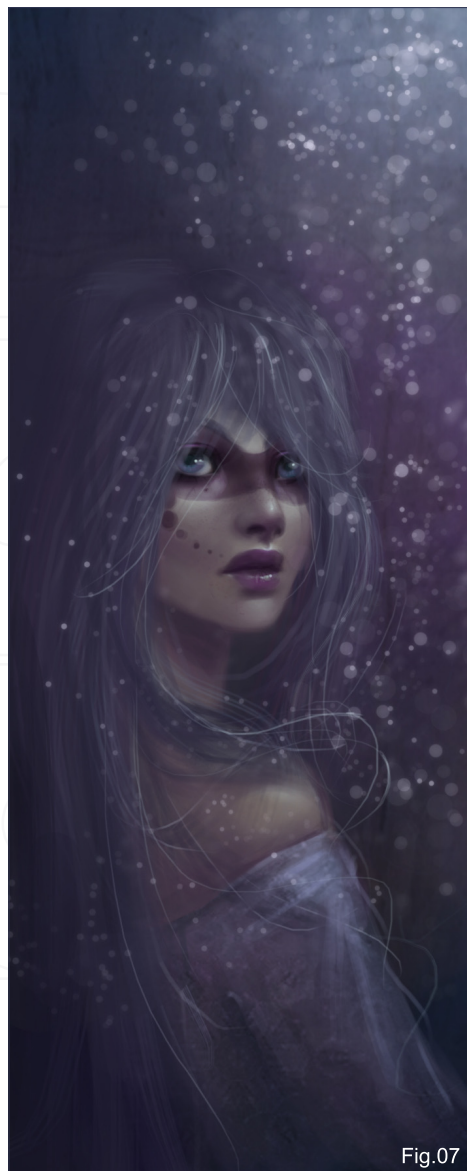


Fig.07

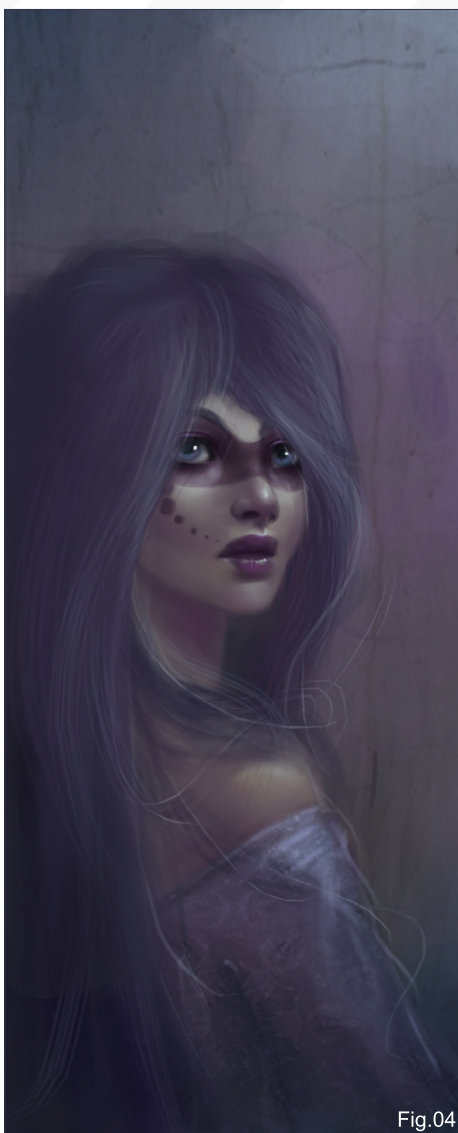


Fig.04

a hard round brush set to scatter and shape dynamics. When I had an effect that I liked, I duplicated the snow layer and blurred it slightly, then set it to overlay at low opacity to give it a soft glow (**Fig.07**).

Step 7:

After some final touch-ups had been done to the face and hair, I saved a flattened version of the image (I always like to save my layers in case I need to edit the image later) and then reopened it in Photoshop for post-production (For me, my images are never really complete until I have done a bit of post-production on them). I then duplicated the image, applied the Gaussian Blur filter at a radius of about 6 pixels, and then set the layer to soft light at low opacity. I flattened the image, and created a new layer,

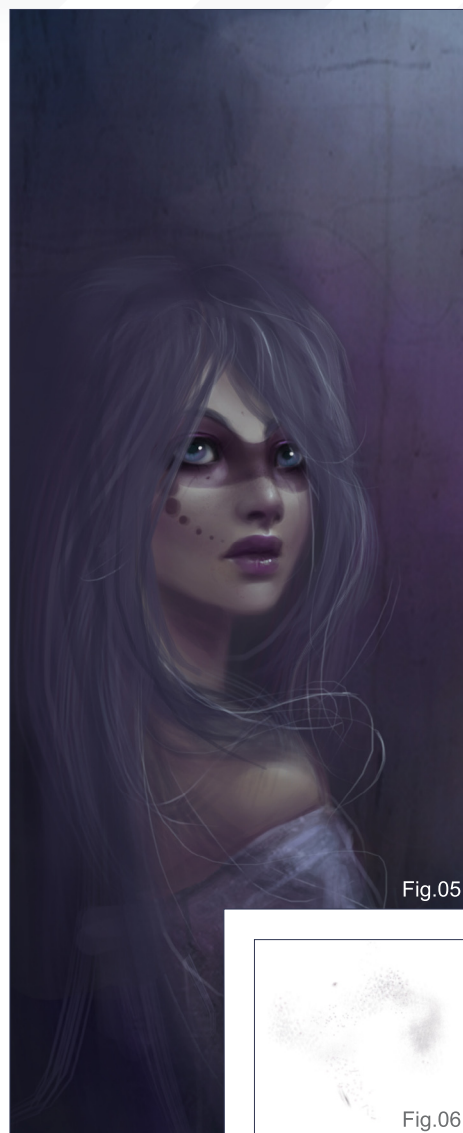


Fig.05

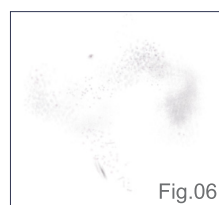


Fig.06

which I filled with a suitable colour for the atmosphere, and then I set the layer to soft light. Flattening the layer again, I adjusted the image using the Brightness/Contrast tool (located under Adjustments in the Image tool list) until I achieved the desired effect (**Fig.08**). The last thing to do was to add the copyright text and it was finished!

I must say I had a lot of fun with this piece and I think I learnt quite a bit from it. I hope you enjoyed reading this "Making Of".

Ejiwa A. Ebenebe

For more from this artist visit:

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Or contact:

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Fig.08

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Concept Art, Digital & Matte Painting Magazine

Issue 040 April 2009



WEREWOLVES GARGOYLES & GOTHIC CHURCHES

ZBRUSH CHARACTER CREATION

Rafael Chencev brings us the penultimate part of our ZBrush Character Creation tutorial series with sculpting a Werewolf. So flip over to page 47 where Rafael explains how he tackled this part and also you can watch him in action by downloading some time lapse movies.

TEXTURING A GOTHIC INTERIOR

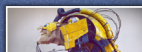
In Part 3 of our Gothic Church Interior Creation series our 5 artists take us through the texturing of their scene for 3dsmax, Lightwave, Cinema 4D, Maya and Modo



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ZBrush Character Creation, plus more!



INTERVIEWS
Sven Juhlin and Thomas Mahler



THE GALLERY
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Also in this month's
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Gothic Church Interior Creation

In conjunction with our Gothic Church Interior Creation tutorial series, we are giving away **51 fully tileable high-resolution textures** (each with the accompanying bump, specular, and in some instances normal maps) from our Total Textures collections to all 3DCreative readers – be sure to click on the yellow Free Resources icon in the Gothic Church Interior Creation tutorials to download your **FREE** textures!

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DIGITAL ART MASTERS VOLUME 3

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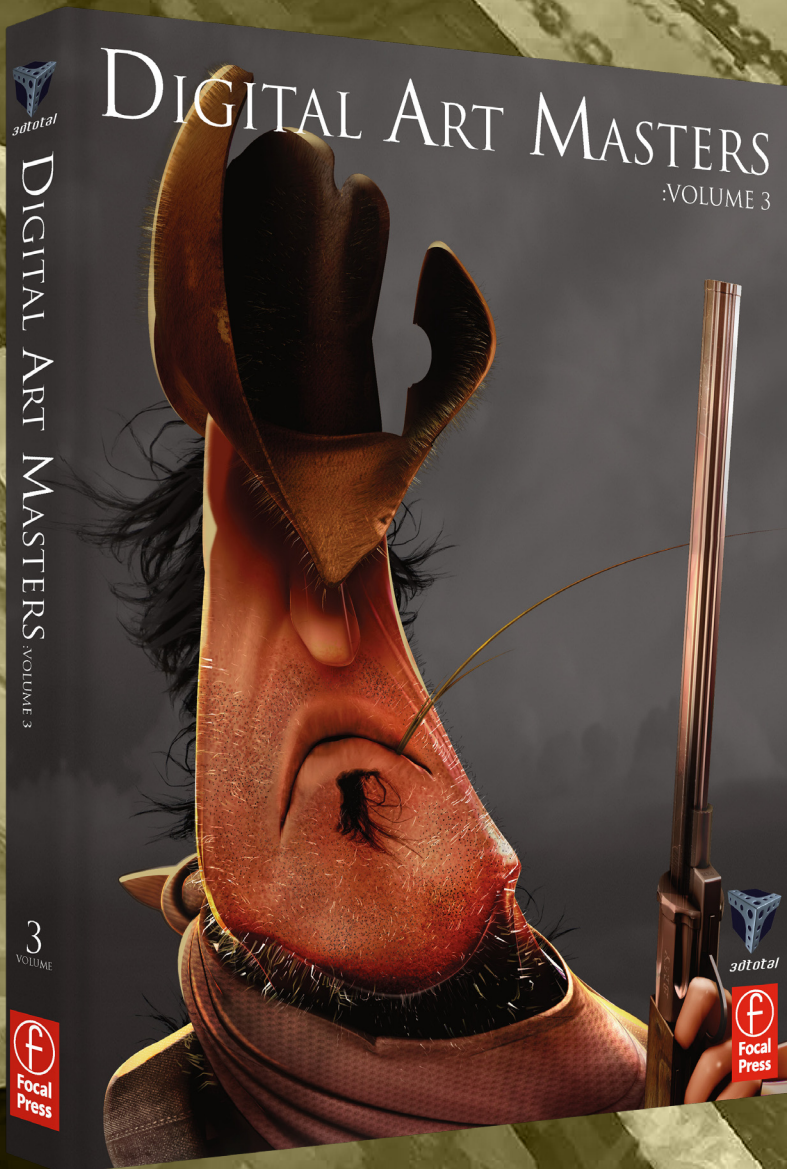
This book is more than just an artwork book. Not only does it feature full-colour, full-page images, but each artist has given a detailed description, in their own words, of the creation process behind each piece of published artwork.

And they've done it especially for this book!

This month we feature:

"Before They Are Hanged"

by Levente Peterffy



The following shots of the "Before They Are Hanged" book pages are featured here in full-resolution and can be read by zooming in...



BEFORE THEY ARE HANGED

BY LEVENTE PETERFFY



IDEA

Usually I just start scribbling on a single colored canvas before a theme is set, but this one had a different story to how I got started. I simply asked a friend of mine to name a theme for a speed painting. He replied "Before they are hanged". I thought about the theme and tried to make a sketch of it in my head. I think it's a



Fig.01

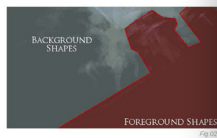


Fig.02a

32

SCENES



Fig.03

good idea sometimes to approach an image this way, especially in practice for production work where you sit with a client and they give you guidelines about the image they want you to create. So, this image got started by a friend naming the theme.

BLOCKING IT OUT

Since the theme was pretty violent, I wanted to approach the perspective differently, avoiding the dull front and side angles. Instead, I wanted to introduce a low-angle shot, slightly skewed. To begin, I picked two colors. These two colors represented the background and the foreground, and they were on separate layers. The background color

SCENES

33



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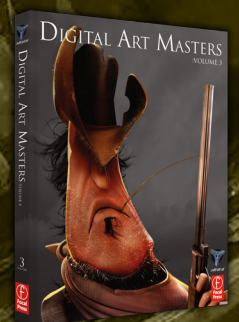


Fig.04

was on the background layer and foreground color was on the layer on top of it (Fig.01). The next step was to start erasing on the top layer. When doing this, I used a low opacity brush. While I erased, I tried to block out shapes of the environment in this angled perspective (Fig.02a-b). When I saw that the shapes were becoming more and more defined, I just kept working on them, adding more texture and solid outlines (Fig.03).

At this point, I'd only been using a very small number of colors. But, when you are blocking out shapes and setting up the image, it's enough. First, when you have the whole image set up in shapes, you can start experimenting with colors and lighting. I have a rule: always use a low opacity - around 10-20% - when it comes to painting light and introducing new colors. This way I can spot a good color without overpainting the image. This process could be pretty long, but with practice one can recognize what colors and combinations work. I think it is good to try to experiment in this stage, too. That way one can stumble upon new color combinations (Fig.04). There are artists reusing the same color palettes from previous paintings - a tip to remember!

CUSTOM BRUSHING

The general idea for a speed painting is to paint down all the important parts of an image as quickly as possible: perspective, shape, color, light, textures and so on. One way to help in this respect is the creation of custom brushes. The effectiveness of a custom brush is evident when it comes to patterns and texture. For instance, it is possible to create a brush that simulates a certain repetitive pattern. It is also possible to create brushes

that make texture painting easier. For instance, it is possible to create a brush that can simulate an oil brush. So with that said, I tried to paint parts of this image with the help of custom brushes. Fig.05 shows an example of a custom brush used. This particular brush was effective because it has sharp edges which helped in painting clear shapes, and it has a textured fill. I use this brush almost all the time when I do these speed paintings! Another example of a custom brush is the "chain-brush", which paints a linked chain in a single stroke!

COLOR SETTINGS

During the painting session I tried to experiment with colors as much as possible. I did this because it was a great way to learn how to use new colors. I stopped experimenting with a certain color palette when I felt that the colors were convincing to me. This could take some time to do, but it's definitely worth it because the learning process is so great! The procedure for this consists of creating different kinds of gradient maps and then applying a blending mode (Overlay, Multiply and so on) to the maps. So, when the layer with a blending mode interacts with the underlying layer, the result might be a good one. The challenge here is to find combinations of colors that work with a blending mode on a layer. There are of course lots of ways (Adjustment Layers, Curves, Photoshop filter, Hue/Sat) to play around with colors, but this is my favorite way of doing it. The colors in Fig.06 were created in this way.



Fig.06

34

SCENES

CONSISTENT PAINTING

When the blocking in of the shapes was done, colors and lighting set, it was just a straightforward task to paint in the details. This meant building on the painting on a smaller level and not really introducing anything new. Let me clarify this with an example: the soldier holding a rifle hanging has the same type of colors as we set earlier and the same type of light interaction as with the other objects. So what I did was to just paint in the same way, only on a smaller scale. The important thing here was to think logically, and the answers were clear. That's really everything there was to it! If we paint the helmet and we know that the helmet is made of metal, it would mean that the light that comes bouncing on it will look slightly brighter than on a non-metal helmet.

With every object that is painted, it is important to think of exactly what kind of an object it is. Because you will probably remember what properties it has and how it interacts with light!

CONCLUSION

When I work with speed paintings I try to approach them with the intention of achieving a painting with the right colors, perspectives, 'right play' and story as imagined in my mind. And with each speed painting I do, it's a lesson learnt, because they are mainly just quick painting sessions, and with each session a certain aspect of the painting comes through. In one speed painting you can have a great texture, and in another painting you can have convincing colors, and so on. For this particular painting I think the colors could have been more convincing than what they really are. And for the story, some more objects could have been depicted. But that's the content of the result which is carried on to the next speed painting session!

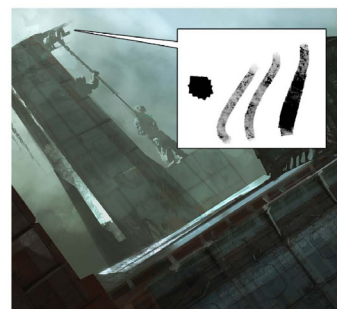


Fig.05

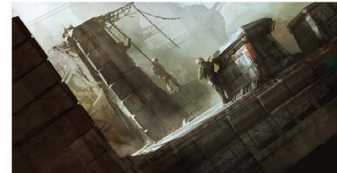


Fig.06

ARTIST PORTFOLIO

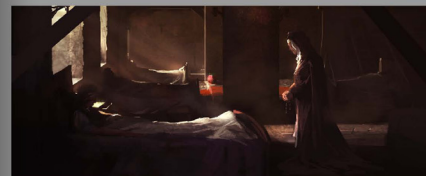


Fig.07 & Fig.08

SCENES

35



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